This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

ASIA
AFRICA
AMERICA

600023311G

CAMP NOTES.

CAMP NOTES.

STORIES OF SPORT AND ADVENTURE IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND AMERICA.

BY

FREDERICK BOYLE,

AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES AMONG THE DYAKS," "A RIDE ACROSS A CONTINENT," "TO THE CAPE FOR DIAMONDS," ETC.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1874.

203. f. 414.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.,
CITY ROAD.

TO

WILLIAM BLACKMORE, ESQ.

TO YOU,

MY DEAR BLACKMORE,

WHO SO LOVE

ADVENTURE,

I DEDICATE THESE RECOLLECTIONS

OF AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE.

118, NEW BOND STREET,
September, 1873.

CONTENTS.

CAMP NOTES :— PAGE

SNAKES 1

LOST IN THE JUNGLE 13

STALKED BY A LION 22

MARRIAGE OUT WEST 32

INDIOS BRAVOS 41

COSAS DE FILIBUSTEROS 51

RAPIDS AND EARTHQUAKES 61

PROSPECTING 69

SAN JUAN DEL NORTE 77

A SAVAGE BEAUTY 86

DOWN AMONG DEAD GODS 104

MEMORIES OF THE JUNGLE 121

THE TIGER-HUNT AT GHAUTSINGH 138

ON LAKE NICARAGUA 157

THE CAREER AND CHARACTER OF RAJAH BROOKE . 172

SAVAGES I HAVE KNOWN 191

THE NEGRO 208

THE HALF-BLOOD 218

THE INDIAN 227

PHIL DEATH, OF SANTA MARTA, ROWDY 235

THE HOUNDS OF THE JUNGLE 255

AFTER THE GEOGRAPHICAL 270

CAMP NOTES.

SNAKES!

ONCE on a time, in wandering round about the earth, I found myself at San Juan del Norté, on the Mosquito Shore. It is not every schoolboy who can give you the latitude and longitude of that geographical expression, but men of middle age will vaguely remember the name of San Juan del Norté as mixed up somehow with the bombardment of Greytown, the protectorate of Mosquito, the vagaries of Filibuster Walker, the insolence of Captain Hollins, U.S.N., and other matters that caused a stir twenty years ago. San Juan del Norté is the greenest little town of all the world. Its streets are paved with short, damp turf—you strike water at a foot down. Palm-trees shadow its market-place. Each alternate house is an "hotel," shingle-built, with a long barn behind to accommodate the bi-monthly crowd of "Transit passengers." By the C.A.T. (Californian Accessory Transit) Company, the little place lives and has its being—had, I should say, for that speculative enterprise is now, in 1873, long dead, and San Juan is probably buried with it. Already, the end was visible, and panics ruled intermittently, even when I visited it. Steamers broke down, "failed to connect," and in all ways showed a bankrupt exchequer and divided counsels. The particular panic I found reigning was so serious that not a few officials of the lower class had obtained a furlough to

"prospect" the country, in hopes of finding some rich digging, which might enable them to return with glory and dollars to the States. It is not my intention, at this moment, to enlarge on the auriferous qualities of the Mosquito Shore, but to tell two camp stories, one of which I know to be true in the main facts, and the other there is no reason to doubt. In so doing, I should wish to preserve the phraseology and manner of the narrators, so far as propriety will permit; but I despair of rendering their quaint spirit and reckless humour without a sin against decorum. Let the reader understand, therefore, that my version, rough and grotesque as it may seem to him, is but a very faint reflection of the humour and extravagance which so amused and interested me by many a camp-fire on the Mosquito Shore.

I was only too glad to join myself to a party, in hopes of seeing a country almost unknown. My companions were three in number: a gigantic Missourian, Secesh to his "soft skin," named Beasley; a Yankee of Dutch family, named Vansten; and a storekeeper of Greytown, English by birth, but extravagantly Yankeeised, named Frazer. We ran up the coast in canoes as far as the Rio Indio, which my companions were anxious to "prospect;" and on the third day, just as the camp was chosen, Frazer killed a python, such a monster as the Mosquito Coast has a just renown for.

"That's nigh the biggest insec' ever I see!" said Beasley, standing over the body. "It must be ollfired dark about his middle inside; wants a window there, I should guess."

"Do you say *so?*" drawled Vansten, spitting on the carcass. "Why, they tell us that out Massoorah-way the snakes air so big, their head and tail sometimes 'fail to connect' at meal-time."

This Transit joke raised a laugh; but before the Missourian could reply, Frazer called on us all to heave at the rope hitched round the monster's neck.

The snake was skinned, doubled over, and stretched in the smoke of our fire, whence the big jaws gaped down at us as we

sat round after supper. Some one observed that "a man's hand would come off pretty easy in them nippers."

"Guess it would!" said Frazer; "guess it would so! But I've seen snakes from China westwards towards eternity—whipsnakes, rattlesnakes, rocksnakes, corals, ulars, sangres, an' all other devils: I've seen pythons an' boas in tens an' hundreds, but one snake I never yet see, an' that's the one as would go aside to hurt a human cretur'. I don't say other folks haven't sot eyes on him, but I never did, an' my travel's been very free!"

"You're in the right ranche, sir!" said Beasley.

"Mr. Boyle here," says Frazer, "wants to know whether any of us, as was born in the woods, an' suckled on tree-juice, ever knew a python to attack a man."

"I'm curious about it," I said, "because I am nearly convinced that constrictor-snakes, however big, are quite harmless. In all my travels, I never met with an instance to the contrary, nor have I ever heard one told with fair *jungle* authority."

"Wal, boys," began the big Missourian, "I'll tell you a right-down scare one of these snakes—worms, we call 'em—gave me down by Leon. It was just at the end of the rains, two years ago. I was riding from Granada to Realejo, on Transit business. An old Greaser* was in company with me, an ollfired sort, who never ate anything, nor drank a drop, nor slept any way comfortable. It's a sort as'll be spunged off this side shortly. A man who don't drink fair an' in reason, likewise sleep, will never think in reason, nor act fair and manly. That is, not in a general way, I take it; though there's exceptions to all things except a six-inch bowie.

"Wal, within a league or two of San Jorgé, the bush thickens up, an' at that time of year it was high-piled, you may swear. Such as it was, the track was clear enough, but the mud of the

* "Greaser," a word frequently used *infra*, is applied by Americans and foreigners to the Creole population, which returns the compliment with *macho*, or he-mule.

rains had crackled it up like ice on the St. Lawrence in a thaw. There was welts and rifts in it as would break a man's leg if he sot step in them; an' the naked tree-trunks stood up all along, plastered an' hanging with dry mud. Man don't improve most things in this country—any way, a Greaser don't. Eh! To look along that crackled mud-track, an' then to throw an eye over the leaves an' flowers of the bush, made a man a'most doubt whether this creation was meant just for him to play his games in.

"We'd travelled a mile or two before dawn, an' the sun was but just up, when I heard a wildish sort of cry in the bush. I stopped, of course, to see what might be going; but your Greaser, he said 'twere only a calf crying, an' we'd best get on. I said, 'That ain't no calf, yer fool! Get on with yer, if yer like, an' save yer darned yeller skin!' So he bowed as perlite as might be, an' went off. I hitched my halter to a prickly espadillo standing there, an' took the bush with my machete an' six-shooter. One or two more cries came ringing out, ringing through me like the voice of no beast ever I see', but they died away choked like. I got on as fast as thorns would let, an' after a while I heerd a rustling an' a crunching as wasn't pleasant sounds in a rooral solitude. Presently I got through to a little tiny clearing, an' in the middle of that was a sight as would have made yer grandmother talk indelicate, if took suddintly.

"It was a pretty little clearing as ever I see. There was a lot o' mountain palms, as they call 'em, growing round the edges. I never see such on mountains, but that's nothing, I s'pose. Guess it's the prettiest stick that springs, that mountain palm. Underneath, on the ground, an' climbing the tree-trunks, was a tangle of blue convolvulus, a big sight more gorgeous than yer best floor-carpets. There were trailing vines there, speckled over with crimson flowers; an' there were purple lilies, an' big soft ferns, an' red-leaved pinuelas. Thunder! what an almighty soil that is by Leon! We're bound to have it, sir! There are hundreds of men as good as William Walker now hanging round San Francisco

an' New Orleans. Let them raise the flag agin, let 'em call on us Western men agin, an' we'll ask no help to take this land, an' make an Eden of it, as it were once. Ay, sir! In spite of all, in spite of Europe an' Yankeedom, we'll raise here such a monument to William Walker as shall overshade the highest throne on 'arth. Western men 'll do it! The East may turn up the yeller of its eyes, an' gas of human right, but the West goes forth in name of right divine. Walker was no filibuster; he was an Avenger an' a Recreator in God's hand!"

"Well, never mind Walker," I laughed; "get on with the story."

"Naow," says Vansten, "don't you be so onkind to him. It was a downright fine bust up that! Reminds me mostly of my late grandmother's style on Independence Day. Get along for Pike County, an' never you sweat for British ignorance."

"Ah! guess every one likes big talk now an' again. You see, sir," Beasley said to me, "I knew Walker well, an' I loved him. I volunteered on the Sonora raid; an' I was first on the list for Nicaragua; ay, an' I was at Trujillo when they shot him. I saw the last of the old lion. I don't care to talk of that business before an Englishman, but if ever so mean an act, so cowardly, so—— All right, Frazer; I'm back on the trail.

"In the middle of the glade was a snake full twenty-five feet long, coiled round the body of a calf. His tail was twisted about a small palm-stem, which shook an' creaked with every spasm of the strain. I could see the muscles lengthen like ropes, an' twist up agin short as lightning, crushing the flesh wrapped in their rings. He had three coils about the body, two side by side, an' one above them. His head was pecking, as I might say, at the poor thing's neck, an' every nip drew forth a jet of blood. The calf was dead, I think, but his hanging tongue quivered with each twisting of the coils, an' his ribs crackled up so as I could hear them where I stood. Thunder! that was a grand pictur'; I never saw a grander. I stood quiet for some minutes, watching,

until the snake gave a last gripe, an' then lay still, sleeking his bloody throat among the flowers, like a swan on a pond-bank.

"Just then, a notion came into my head to kill the varmin, for he was the biggest I ever see, an' his skin would be worth a good 'pinch' at the Sological places in New York. I weren't such an etarnal fool as to take shots at the cretur', for I knew a blow o' that long tail would bust in a man's brain-box like cracking hickories; so I put about in my mind how it should be done. Just then, I caught sight of the loose end, wagging and waving like a kitten's when it sees a ball of twist; an' I thought, 'Suppose you, Jem Beasley, was to armputate that 'ere loose end!'—Thunder! I did it slick. A slice of my machete armputated two foot six as clean as a minister's daughter at visitation!

"Wal! an' then, ye know, I sloped etarnal quick; but the snake were quicker, I tell you! The rattle an' crashing behind me was loud enough to scare a marble staatoo; an' before I'd got three yards through the bush, I knew it were on my trail. Great Heaven, how I swot! I tore along through the thorns an' pinuelas, leaving flesh on every bush; but it weren't no use, an' I knew that well. The durned worm glided after me sure as Death, making two yards to my one. I swear to you, boys, I heerd it snorting an' roaring like a wounded grisly, an' its stinking breath blew cold through my back. I knew 't were no use running, an' in a few seconds the scare passed off—'t were downright bad at first—an' I turned to front the varmin. But when I saw *it* not three feet from me, I turned to run agin, an' I'm ashamed to own it to no man. Its throat was bent up in an under-curve to the level of my waist, an' the great white mouth was all agape, an' clotted with thick blood. Behind it was a whirl of leaves an' dust an' broken branches, an' in the midst shone two big eyes, mad with spite, glaring into mine. Such eyes—great God!—such eyes! They seemed to burn an' stare with a fire from inside, an' the clear cover over them looked white and filmy, like horn. I mind me thinking, 'If they would but blink,

those awful eyes; if they would but glance aside, only for a pulse-beat, I would be all myself agin'. But they glared an' blazed out of the dust with such fiendish spite that I felt like a squirrel charmed by the rattler.—At St. Louis once, I see a madman chained, who had just that look.—Ah! An' then I don't recollect much more. There was a crash an' a wild rush—a reeking stench filled my nostrils—a pressure like death wrapped in my throat an' chest—I felt blow after blow upon my head—then, I suppose, I swounded with suffocation an' loss of blood.——

"It was that old Greaser saved me. He guessed something was wrong, an' came back to see. A good old fellow he were, but so durned perlite! The snake gave him a likely blow with its tail before it let me go; but he cut right an' left with his machete, an' the cretur' slunk off at last. I had three ribs broken, my face an' scalp bitten to ribbons, as you see, an' my left arm fractured in two places. The loss of his tail to 'bear' on saved me; but 't were a durned close thing that time, boys; an' I don't know as ever I felt more kindly to any man than I did to that old Greaser. Though he were perlite—he were!

"But I'd near forgotten the p'int of the nairrative; that snake went back an' ate his calf—by the Etarnal, he did, boys!"

"Naow, that's a pretty likely story," sneered Vansten. "Is anybody agoin' in against Pike County? If so, let him look up his dictionāry words, an' cast a mental glance over the *Police Gazette.* There's superior adventure an' right-down first-class fiction in the Accident column."

"Beasley's story is true enough," Frazer flashed out, "an' you know that well, Double Dutch! Tell yer what it is, hombre, if your interior is not fixed with a new and superior windhole before we sight Greytown agin, I shall be ghashly surprised. Colonel Bowie is king on the Rio Indio, mind yer. Naow, I'll tell yer a story myself, Mister Boyle, as ain't quite so scarin' as Pike County's, but we're pretty rising to the system.

"It was out Eastaway. We'd run over from Singapore to

Sarawàck, which ollfired desolation Sir James Brooke, Bart., has changed from a free an' enlightened republic into a bigoted monarchy. Now, *sir*, I ain't going to argoo with you or any man, so don't do it. The change may ha' been for the good o' that well-wooded country or it may not; it's a fact, an' that's enough for me. When I get hold of a downright live fact, I claw on to it tight, for such ain't common."

"I was only going to ask whether Rajah Brooke's kingdom is called Sara-wàck by the natives?"

"No, sir. The down-trodden heathen call it Saràwah; but that's nothing.

"We were loading ship-timber in the creek of Maritabás, which might prove a good location for mosquito-culture, but ha'n't no other resources, so fur as I know. The Company were so ollfired slow in sending down lumber, that we prospected the country freely in waiting for it. Among other travels, I got to the Sántubong mouth of the Sarawàck River, an' passed a day or two there shooting wild pigs, which air deev'lish frequent about that coast. We were wandering one day along the foot o' the mountain, me, an' Harding the mate, an' a kind o' mad squatter I found there, who was growing a big thing in cocoa-nuts an' consiquint dung-beetles. One of our boatmen was with us too, a good sort, named S'Ali, one of them wild Sulumen who live on general plunder, an' thrive in face o' the Ten Commandments.

"We were travelling through 'Campong' jungle, as they call it there—old clear wood, where there ain't much game, nor ought else but tree-trunks. They're powerful pretty, as you say, Beasley, these woods of Mosquito and San Juan; they're right down gay an' happy-looking with their flowers an' painted birds, an' butterflies an' living creturs. But there's a something about them eastern forests which we can't hoe aginst nohow. The trees there are bigger in girt' an' taller; an' their great branches so shut out the sun, that 'twixt time an' eternity nought has ever lived beneath 'em. Hundreds of yards round, you may throw yer

eye down long dim avenoos of tree-trunks, an' not a leaf nor a green thing in sight, unless, maybe, a ruff of fern, or a long trailing orchid, or a pile of monkey-cups growing side by side like tea-cups on a tray. A man might go mad easy in them 'Campongs,' I should guess! It's right down lonely to go through them by yourself; an' the Lord have care and mercy on yer if yer lose the trail! No cretur' lives in them, neither bird, nor beast, nor reptile. There is never a sound to be heard. The party goes silently along, Indian fashion, like as a dim procession of ghosts winding among the trees. Just the crackling of a stick in the oozy black soil underfoot makes one start out. It's a right down solemn thing, I tell yer, boys, is a Campong forest of the Straits.

"Wal, sir! that day we were cruising round without any thought of game, which is only to be got near sundown or at night. A little bowie an' a jack-knife was all the weepons we had with us. The squatter was heading to the Company's lumber-mills, which had just been fixed up in this likely location. We was through the little corner of Campong to be traversed, an' was skirting a line of new jungle where the undergrowth shot up like as a wall of green, an' where every inch of roadway must be cut before you.

"The squatter was a lazy sort, except at drinking an' beetle-picking, an' he walked along the line of brush looking out for a soft place. Suddenly, I pulled him up short by pointing out the queerest bit o' log-timber ever you see. It was a regular half-circle curving outwards into the Campong, both ends being hidden by the thick jungle, which hung down like a mat. A rum-looking log that were, boys! 'Twas just the very longest size of python, to have an end at all, as can be matched in this creation. I were not so old a woodsman then, an' at first sight I did take the cretur' for a fine specimen of log-timber—I did so. His skin was all wrinkled an' hanging, like bark on a dying trunk; an' the black an' grey scales, nigh as big as my palm,

looked just as moss might on a rotten tree. We stood still staring at him, an' talking in whispers.

" ' Damme!' mutters the squatter, ' he's five foot girt' if he's a hinch, an' hungry at that. Look at the baags of his skin: he'll not lie still much longer!'

" ' A forty-footer, I guess,' says Harding, ' an' that count would leave a fair margin for emergency in the matter o' tail.'

" ' Now, what's the idee predominating in your indombitable soul?' whispers I to the squatter. ' Shall we track off, or shall we waken this large-size reptile?'

" ' Guess this territóry air mine, if it's hany one's,' says he; ' an' if sarpints, which is a beast as don't eat beetles, comes on my ground, ahinterfering with my cocoa-nuts an' my British liberty, which haas subsisted through etarnity, by the downright sing'lar protection of Heving—I say I've a right to execute that sarpint—or more so.'

" I thought that old beetle-catcher was mad when first I see him, an' at that moment I knew it.

" ' How air you goin' to execute him?' I whispered.

" ' Wal,' he said, ' I'm the tallest an' strongest of this party, an' I shall take your boatman's parang,* give one chop at the cretur's body, an' run away as fast as my extr'or'nary agility will permit. Arter that,' said he, ' we'll come with the dogs, track the blood, an' shoot him.'

" I didn't half like it, I tell you; but Harding chuckled up like a charity-boy on washin'-day; an' says he, spitting on his hands: ' Shall I hold his tail for you, mister, while you make a chip?'

" But the old squatter he turned to S'Ali, who was standing about twenty feet away, an' beckoned him up: ' Give me your parang,' whispers he, with his eyes fixed on the snake. But the nigger never stirred.

* The heavy sword or wood-knife carried by Malay peoples. The shape of the blade differs considerably for different purposes, and in different tribes, but the handle is always at an obtuse angle curious to see.

"'Give me your parang, darn yer,' muttered the squatter; but devil a bit did he move.

"We all turned. The Malay's face was green an' yellow in dull patches, an' the sweat stood out shiningly all over it; an' as we stood looking, his eyes suddenly began to roll, an' he drew the heavy parang slowly from the sheath; then the black of his eyes went up under the lids, an' flashed out again, quick as thought. He held the parang straight in front, shaking the end like a Dutchman handling a bowie. His lips parted, an' the foam, red-stained with pénang, gathered about his ebony teeth. I thought the nigger was going into a fit, an' turned towards the squatter with my mouth open to speak; but *his* face was so gray an' set with fear, that I was strucken dumb. He clutched me with a trembling hand. 'Come on, come away!' he whispered hoarsely. We knew no other peril, Harding an' I, but that big snake lying quiet at our feet; but the old man was so ghashly scared, that we turned without a word, an' followed him on the back-track. Once Harding trod on a dry stick, which snapped sharply in the silence—such a face the old man turned on us!

"About fifty yards away, I looked behind. S'Ali was standing with his back to us, slowly waving the parang, an' seeming to pant and shake all over. Suddenly his feet moved, an' he began to dance backwards an' forwards, with arms outstretched, an' humming a low song. Thunder! it was about as funny a scene as one could wish to behold, if we'd only had a six-shooter or a rifle among us. But when the old squatter heard that song, he glanced behind, an' in an instant took to his heels. 'Amok, amok!' was all the answer he'd give to our breathless questions, an' we needed no more to make us show our 'extr'or'nary agility.' S'Ali was on the very point of running a muck, when we took alarm, an' left him.

"Yes, it was fear that drove him mad, if you can call an 'amok' mad. He came back to the bungalow about two hours afterwards, an' asked me, as calm as could be, whether we had

killed the snake after he left. I got rid of him quietly in Singapore, an' his next master had my very primest sympathy."

"Did you ever again meet an 'amok'?" I asked.

"Yes, sir! I did so. And maybe I'll tell you that some day. It were a likely story, you may swear.—Kingman,* must we set a watch in this ollfired location?"

* Mosquito Indians are generally called Kingmen.

LOST IN THE JUNGLE.

"YOU were nigh lost to-day," said Vansten to me one night "I don't know as any of us, barring the Kingman, would. have found his way back more cool an' clever than you did. It needs right-down pluck to keep the wits together when one's lost."

"This was not the first time with me," I said; "but I don't know that the experience becomes more agreeable by repetition."

"There's no man could describe what it is to feel lost who hadn't tried it for himself," said Beasley. "I've been lost in a many ways: once on the Texan prairie; once on the Pampas; twice on the gold mountains past Libertad; an' I'd blush to know how many times on Schnaps; but I never were lost in green-wood yet, an' thank God! for that's an exper'ence I kind o' don't seem to valoo. It's scaring enough when you can see yer way before an' behind, as on them lonely mountains of Chontales; but there's few would keep their senses twenty-four hours in the forest."

"As to keeping one's senses, I don't speak," said Vansten; "but I've kept my life in for seventeen days behind Castillo Viejo, an' in that time I hadn't a bite to eat, barring piñuela leaves an' 'pig-apples.' Seventeen days they tell me it were, an' no doubt their reckoning was right; I weren't likely to be mindful. When I was gettin' spry agin, it somewhiles seemed to ha' been ten years, an' somewhiles only a few hours. I've heerd doctors say a man couldn't live more 'n a week without food, but law bless yer! them sumphs argue an' argue among themselves for years, going on what they call intarnal evidence an' sound reason, when they

might have fixed the matter in a minute by asking us, who've made their experiments willye nillye. I guess we four here round this fire could pass most doctors a key or two they aren't likely to find about their parlours, nor yet to discover by intarnal evidence. I lived on piñuela pith an' pig-apples seventeen days, an' the scientific folk in New York told me to my face it were downright unpossible. Says the boss of them: 'Piñuela pith of no wild kind air capable of supportin' life by itself, an' of pig-apples you say you could scarce find six in a day.' 'Tarnal thunder,' says I, 'I did it!' 'Must be mistaken, my good man; you must have been deceived.' 'Wal!' I said, 'I don't mostly like to call a man bad in his own house, but if I was to meet you in an asylum for incurable idiots, I should express no rude astonishment.' 'An' if I were providentially to encounter you,' said he grinning, 'arm-in-arm with the late Ananias and Sapphira his wife, I should call it quite a family party!' So I pitied him, an' left, for he wur a poor little cuss to handle."

"Wal! I should a kind o' risen aginst the notion myself, if I hadn't heard of it before," said Beasley. "You was the man, was you? There must be a likely pile of twist in your inside, if you lived on piñuelas for seventeen days. But I've heard of that tale, an' you was the man? I thought the ants had gnawed yer nose off. What's the story?"

I also had heard, as who had not in those parts, of the man who lived seventeen days in the forest, and I knew the tale to be true.

"It's not much to tell," said Vansten, after a long pull at the Schnaps bottle, "but it were awful enough to feel. Ours was almost the earliest passage across Nicaragua to California. We embarked at New York, some fifty of us, steamed to Greytown, an' there chartered every bongo about the place to take us up the river, for there was no Transit Company then. It was a reg'lar little fleet; an' a fine time we had as far as Castillo—the liveliest time ever I see. There was lashin's of drink aboard, an' cards,

an' some of 'em made a very pretty plunder going up. We were a wild lot, boys, that's a fact! Them was the days for adventure on the transit! It's lively now sometimes, but the San Juan is like the river of the New Jerusalem beside of what it once was. Half the party was allurs down in the horrors, an' the other half was up in the same; from one minute to another, a man could not call his life his own; every pistol was filed in the lock, so that it nigh went off by looking at it! The fighting was right-down free: we lost three men between Greytown and Castillo."

"But was there no attempt to keep order? The natives must have suffered badly in those wild times," I asked.

"The Greasers daren't say much nowadays, I guess, when the miners are on the river, an' they were even higher-handed in the days before Walker. Besides, your high-moral Queen of England undertook the police business of the San Juan at that time, an' a happy mess she made of it! There was one policeman at Greytown to keep order among a thousand San Francisco rowdies, an' that lonely official was allurs down with fever. The English seemed to think their etarnal Union-jack was a warrant to discount the millennium. No! no one meddled much with us in those days, an' I don't think we can fairly bluster now. Where's the man who shot those two brothers under the balcony of the *Union Hotel*, last trip? You saw that murder only ten days ago, an' I tell *you* the man as did it'll be found in New York when the passengers are discharged next month.

"We reached Castillo at sun-down, an' lay quiet all night at the foot of the rapids. In the morning, the bongos were hauled up; but it was a long job, for one only could be taken at a time, an' that empty. We loafed about on the bank watching the boats, an' lending a hand now an' then, but it was slow work, an' etarnal hot, so most of us soon fell to poker an' monté in the shade. I saw there was little chance of getting up for the next three hours, so I strolled off by myself, for I was young, an' new to the tropics, an' natur' kind o' interested me. I'd walked half-an-hour maybe

through the bush, admiring the flowers, an' leaves, an' birds, when suddintly a tortus-rabbit (armadillo) crossed in front of my track, feeding an' rooting about. He was nigh as big as a sheep, the heaviest sort, in fact, an' I'd heard what good eating such are; so I thought I'd go back quietly, borrow a rifle, an' come for him agin.

"Accordingly, I turned in my track, an' slipped through the bush, mighty clever, as I thought, without scaring the cretur. Maybe an hundred yards I'd got along, going as innocent as an addled egg, when suddintly I came to a big rubber-tree, scored about like a cork-screw. 'Guess I didn't pass that before,' thought I, an' looked round. I tried right an' I tried left, but couldn't strike the trail,—for there was no trail to strike! I'd gone into that unpeopled forest as if there was roads an' sign-boards in it; I hadn't blazed a tree nor taken sights, an' if ever a man deserved to be lost from right-down carelessness an' folly, I was that man. But it's an awful penalty to pay, sir, for a bit of boyish stupidity. I wandered right an' left round the rubber-tree until them thoughts came in my mind, an' then my heart turned sickly. 'Let's try back on the rabbit,' I said out loud, an' my voice sounded strange an' lonely in the hot stillness of the wood. So I tried back. I went out, as I thought, on the trail I'd come by; but after half-an-hour I'd not reached the glade. 'Lost! Lost!' kept buzzing in my ears; an' I prayed, I fought, to keep cool; but that was unpossible for a boy like me. After a while the mad fit came on, an' I dashed through the bush shouting an' raving till my throat bled. The sweat poured down like a cold rain, an' I knew my wits were going. Every instant I was down headlong, but I held on still, until the fit passed away, leaving me weak an' helpless. 'Good Lord!' I prayed then, 'let me get back to the rubber-tree.' Somehow the thought was in me I'd be saved if I could get to any spot I knew. More'n two hours I was creeping through the bush, an' at last, by simple chance, I reached the trunk, an' sat down there.

"Lord! lord! it were a lovely scene around. The day was

just at noon, an' the straight sun-rays shook down through the leaves, an' lit them up like gold. The flowers was out, such as could grow in that green twilight, "foxgloves," an' orchids, an' such; but the ferns an' the shrubs were more beautiful than flowers. There was a tall tree-fern over against me, crowned with feathery leaves, that shone transparent as green glass. On the other side was a wild banana, bearing a crimson mop of flowers. The climbing moss fell as a pale water-fall from the tree-tops, an' the long lianas hung down like brown cords. One of them dropped just above my head, naked an' leafless, but at the tip of it glittered a crimson flower, like a jewel hanging from the sky. The air was so hot, an' green, an' still, except for a faint quiver which from time to time ran through the forest, that one might have thought the world was dead, an' buried in those piles of leaves. While the stupid fit was on, I sat an' watched a little army of ants, each carrying a round green leaf upraised as a flag, that hurried along their deep-worn road. A checker of sunlight fell on that brown pathway, an' I mind well how the small creturs sparkled in crossing it. After a while, the dead hot stillness was broken by the chuckle an' croaking of two parrots that fluttered in a tree above me; but with a rustle of leaves they flew sleepily away.

"I'd sat there maybe for an hour stupid an' unthinking, when suddintly the forest resounded with a deep roar, that started me afoot. I'd never heard a congo's howl before, but I'd no fear of that sound; the consciousness of being lost had come back on me. Straight on I crashed through the bush, torn, bruised, an' falling, through marsh, an' creek, an' bamboo thicket, until exhaustion pulled me down once more. You see, sir, I was very young in years, an' had never before seen a forest bigger than a corn-patch. I'd just sense enough to know that one must die in the bush, an' die an awful death, if left there; but how to find a way out, I had no more idee than any other boy city-born an' bred.

"From time to time I shouted as shrill as I could, but the deep hot alleys of the forest sucked in the sound; an' before sundown, I was too hoarse for calling. As night came on, I sank down stupid again, an' so lay, not asleep but senseless. If a puma had found me then, he'd have had his supper cheap, but, thank Heaven, I never met one of them sneaking devils. When morning broke, I was faint an' sick with hunger, but for hours I was afeard to take the few fruits that lay round. Towards mid-day, always wandering, I found a bunch of yellow pig-apples growing on a 'vine;' they looked so nice that, poison or no poison, I gathered them all, an' chawed them up. They're not bad eating aren't pig apples, anywhere, but to a starving man they do seem right-down good, I tell you. But there wasn't more than six or seven, and the biggest not the size of a pigeon's egg, so they were soon over; an' all that day I found no more. Somehow, I never thought of being tracked, but only of getting back, an' of finding more apples. Once or twice I heard the sound of American rifles at a long distance, an' it almost killed me, for I *couldn't* make the boys hear. Towards dusk, I found a bed of wild pines, and pulling out their prickly leaves, I ate the pith. I can't say it were nice, but neither was I at that time.

"On the second day I began to feel hunger right badly. At first it was a gnawing, weakly sense, less hard to bear because one felt helpless an' tired; but after twenty-four hours, hot fever came on, and I seemed so wild and strong to die. Of drink there was plenty, of course, for the ground was all a swamp, an' besides, the water-vines was common enough. 'There's greater medicine, sir, in those water-vines than all the doctors can make for you. If a man, sick to death with some diseases, will but come with me into the forest, I'll send him out at the week's end better in health than if his dearest friend had just deceased. There's wonderful secrets in the woods, an' we have them pretty much to ourselves as yet, we who know them. Them seventeen days behind Castillo shook my health for five years after, but at least I left there all the

sickness I took with me; so I can't say it was all bad luck that time, seeing as I got out in the end.*

"The third day was dreadful bad for hunger. I had a tearing an' refting inside, my sight was flaming an' dim by turns, an' pain twisted up every joint. My head was curiously clear all the while, except that sometimes I saw things in the wood as never was there; but that was mostly after the fourth day, when the pains left me from time to time. I guess hunger takes men very different. Some I've known give in with forty-eight hours, an' lie down to die with no great suffering—ay, an' good-hearted ones too. But your doctors stamp down their little walk, all gravelled an' boxed in, for etarnal nature to take exercise up or down, an' if ever she steps over their little hedge into her own wide fields, my! there's such a stampede among all the little professors. They told me in New York as no man could live ten days without food—there! An' we know a score of men as has done so, and don't make much gas about it neither.

"It would take a week to go through all the fancies I had, an' the strange figures that came before me in the time I kept a sort of consciousness, for I was light-headed mostly. I seem to recollect meeting a big tiger, an' looking him straight between his flaming eyes, without a morsel of fear; but he slunk off like a starved cat, an' you may guess I was an elegant extract so to scare a San Juan jaguar. The thundering howl of congos, morning an' evening, is the mem'ry I mind best of all that time. One day there was a little mottled squirrel came an' sat in a great fern over against me, and looked down into my face with eyes that seemed full of pity. Eh! how I hated that little cretur, that looked so lovingly at me. I crept nearer and nearer, to catch him, but he sprang away like

* The author is very well acquainted with the liana referred to, and regrets that his botany cannot confirm his woodcraft by identifying the species. It is a broad thick-leaved parasite, soft in the stalk, which discharges full half a pint of water when cut through. There can be no reasonable doubt that it possesses remarkable qualities as medicine, though the author cannot attest his personal experience. The sap is drunk without any preparation, and natives and foreigners are alike enthusiastic about its strange virtues.

a bird, and I was too weak even to curse. Sometimes I fancied all my mates were with me, but all lost and dying; sometimes we were on the river; and there's one dream I mind well, for it came over an' over agin—a game at poker, in which one player cheated, an' I shot him. It had happened so on the river; but I wasn't playing, and it wasn't I that shot. If it had been, if I'd had any man's blood on my mind at that time, I'd have given in the very first week of the horror. My dreams, awake an' asleep, were always full of murder and death somehow. Now there's a cause for that, I take it, somewhere in one's inside, for there's folks who dream happy when they're starving.

"I suppose I gathered apples when they could be found, an' chewed pinuelas, even when mad, for I kept on living. That I wandered about, never resting longer in one place than just to get strength for moving on again, I know, for it was one of the fancies that I must wander ever an' ever through the green dimness o' the bush, under the endless trees, until I died. Ah! it was an awful time. Sometimes it seemed as I had been lost for years; an' then my mem'ry was racked with old stories of men finding their way out of a wood by some clever craft or other, but the tales was all muddled up with murders, an' old times, an' ghosts. 'Twould have been easy enough for a good woodsman to track out; and maybe I might have done it myself, if I'd hidden my head at the first moment, an' thought it over quietly as you did to-day, sir; but I hadn't the exper'ence, that's where it is! Exper'ence is better than a compass, any day. The creeks at which I drank, most likely all of them, would have led me to the San Juan, where I'd have been saved; and in the days I had some strength an' reason, I might have followed them up and down. For *all those seventeen days I never were three miles from Castillo*, an' they found me at last within two hundred yards o' the fort. That would seem a queer story to home-staying folk, wouldn't it? But a green hand might a'most starve to death in a patch of San Juan forest three hundred yards square.

"Of the last ten days in the bush, I recollect nothing at all, an' I'm thankful for it. For the ants found out my helplessness, an' the beetles, an' the flies; only, thank God, the turkey-buzzards didn't come nigh me until the last minute. But when my body was found by the soldiers in going for grass, there was half-a-dozen of the horrid wretches waddling round with their leathery heads aside, and hopping each moment closer. An' another queer sign they found, which had, maybe, scared the birds; all round my body were the tracks of pumas, as thick as if they'd been dancing a considerable sight of fandango among themselves. Why they hadn't eat me, I can't think; for he's a cowardly brute, yer lion, an' its sweet cake to him to find a man asleep or dying.

"Wal! I don't want to make yer ill, so I won't describe the state my poor body was in when they found it. I know I've always thought better of Greasers' pluck since them soldiers ventured to carry my carcass to the fort. The Lord have mercy on all sick men in the jungle! You heard the ants had eaten my nose off! It weren't quite as bad as that; but in an hour or two more they'd a done it, if the turkey-buzzards had let them. My finger-ends was eaten by them, an' my ears; an' as to the flies, look here! a man might shudder at that, I think, even though he were bred for a city lawyer, and had merried young. It's a ghastly thing to be eaten alive by insects, but never a man living was nearer to that end than I."

"Ah!" said Frazer, "the Pumas 'd a finished you off kerslash if you'd been fit to eat; an' it's a wonder them sneaking vermin didn't track you out long since. I mind once on the Serebpiqui, being hunted by a puma for two days and nights. I knew he was trailing me, ready for a chance, but I couldn't get a sight of him all that time. But I squared it off in the end—I did so. How came the soldiers to find you, Vansten?"

"They were prospecting for sacate for the commandante's mule, and came across me in the swamp.—It's midnight past, boys, an' I'm right down sleepy. Good-night!"

STALKED BY A LION.

"THE other night," said I to Frazer, "you spoke of a puma following your trail for two or three days. If the story is not 'Sabbath gas,' I should like to hear it, for, though they tell a similar tale of lions in Africa, the fact has always seemed doubtful to me."

"I've piped off Sabbath gas in my time, I don't deny, but under the woods we mostly tell truth. Them stories you may swear upon; I've been tracked myself, and so has Pike County. He's just a hairy devil, yer puma, playful, an' cowardly, an' cruel, like some women as one sees. Bring him up from a kitten, tame him as thoroughly as you will, stuff his skin till he nigh explodes, an' still you can't trust a child within his sight, nor turn your back upon him safely.

"The ugliest skrimmy I ever had with lions* was down the Serebpiqui, after that etarnal raid of Schlesinger's upon Costa Rica. We didn't travel far, sir, as you know, for the Greasers gave us the durnedest whipping at Santa Rosa that ever I had since my old grandmother deceased. How they did it, or what was the sign that scared us, no one could plan out, an' I believe—ay, by the Etarnal, I believe—some of our boys was witched! It was a right-down whipping, anyway! There was a couple of hundred of us in the *corral* [cattle-yard]—every man ready an'

* Throughout America, the puma is called "lion," and the jaguar, a much more dangerous animal, "tiger." It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that all the species of Tropical America differ from those of the Old World.

droughty to face ten Greasers, bragging all his pile upon the trick: there was nary one among them boys but had been suckled on a six-shooter, an' vaccinated with a bowie; but we ran, sir, every man of us, before a hundred and eighty Greasers! We did *so!* The yeller-faced cusses was heard in the brush five minutes before they broke out, an', as far as I could see, every man of us was at his post. Naow, it's no good blowing, Beasley! we were fairly whipped, an' you an' I ran with the rest; so what's the use of gas? I say we were mostly all at our places by the palisade before they charged across the open. My man fell clean an pretty, with the bullet fair between his eyes, where a ranger's bullet should be: an' then, before the smoke had cleared away, they were over the fence an' swarming down among us. Twenty of us rangers would have mussed—ay, an' had done an' did after—the whole durned drive of 'em; but—but, cuss it, we ran like sheep! Who led the way, I don't know; they said Schlesinger, but I didn't see him. I only tell there wasn't twenty of us killed, no, nor yet disabled, when we cleared out. Eh! one feels mad yet, a-thinking of that day. Us—the pick o' Walker's army, Westerny men two out of three on us—to stampede before a drive of Greasers! I see men cry that day as hadn't cried since they wore out their cradles! We had our turn with the Costa Rican cusses many a time after that, but there's never a man with us can think of Santa Rosa without feeling wolfish. Ay! an' that were Walker's first check, too! If we'd taken Cartago or San José, he might have been President of Central America now, maybe; an' Beasley an' I been high-Greaser generals, with fifty dollars pay per annum, finding our own gold buttons."

"But, man," I said, "San José has seven thousand inhabitants, and Cartago has twelve thousand, and the two cities are not fifteen miles apart. Were you going to attack those mountains with two hundred men?"

"Guess we were!" returned Frazer composedly; "leastwise,

so we thought in the army, an' I never heerd that Schlesinger's instructions was different. But you see a hundred an' eighty Greasers was enough to turn us about an' send us into the woods with the loss of all our plunder. Yet *you* know how they stood against us at Rivas an' Granada, an' I guess we'd 'a stepped out just as free for San José—eh, Beasley?"

"Guess we would so, hoss! But Santa Rosa took all the stiffening out of *my* neckcloth. Lord! O lord! a hundred an' eighty Greasers!"

"Wal, some of us surrendered on good terms, an' some made straight tracks for the San Carlos, an' some kept down the river. Jem, there, was one of those that made for San Carlos, an' a queer story he'll tell you of his voyage, if you can squeeze it out of his modesty some night. As to whether it's true, I don't give no opinion, but it kinder does one's ears good to hear."

"Why, did yer fall in with the Guatusos, Pike?" asked Vansten laughing.

"That's just what he did," said Frazer. "An' stranger things than Guatusos there is in that wild Frio country.

"There was five or six of us started together down the river-bank, walking through the shallows, an' cutting our way where the water was too deep. Now, I guess I've seen the tropics mostly everywhere. I've travelled through the East Indies an' the West Indies, an' round about the islands, but never yet did I sot eyes on such a forest as stands round the head-waters of the Serebpiqui. The only place that can hold agin it for beauty is Ceylon, an' one an' t'other should be put under glass, an' kept for sinful folks to stare at. There's no such trees here as on them hills, an' no such ferns, nor lianas, nor flowers. Where we struck it first on our retreat, the Serebpiqui is a little tumbling brook, all full of purple stones, an' fringed with great leaves an' fern. The water leaps an' foams through the bamboo thickets an' the valleys, so that its spray always hangs above it like the spray of breakers on a sand-bar. Overhead, the forest palms join their

shining tops; an' big tree-ferns, crowding to the brink, shake feathery heads all day long to the quick beat of the water. The shallow banks are thick with flowers, the wet moss sparkles like jewel work, scrub-palms an' climbing vines cover the rocks like a hanging carpet. There's the greatest variety of painted leaves there that I ever see, much greater than in Borneo, where they do good trade in such plants. I tell you, sir, the Serebpiqui river runs through a fairy-land such as few could pictur', an' I guess the hardest couldn't go along that trail without feeling kinder grateful there was so much beauty left on earth. I can't describe them to you, an' no man could—the flowers, an' golden leaves, an' happy sunshine. Jem can run off high-prime gas sometimes, but my father never gave us a chance to learn accomplishments. The minister, says he, may flourish any way, because he daren't reel off his feelings manlike in honest swearing; but don't yer give us anything of that sort, my son, because, if yer do, I'll apprentice yer to the county newspaper, an' make yer responsible for the weekly poetry.

"We didn't take much pains to keep together, for all was good woodsmen, an' the Serebpiqui track was more lonely then than even now, so it was little danger of meeting enemies. Nor was there fear of starving either, for the fish lay in shoals under every rock, an' all had their rifles an' lots of ball. Empty, darned empty, as we were, six or seven days should have taken us to the San Juan mouth, so we hung back in twos an' threes, prospecting for gold an' all that.

"At the end of three days from Santa Rosa, Jed Smith, an' Gregory of Galveston, an' I found ourselves alone. Jed notioned that whatever gold might be in the stream would be found at the mouth of it, an' we pressed on, thinking to get down first. None of us knew there was any *muelle* [place of embarkation] at all upon the river; we thought its banks was uninhabited the whole way down. It wasn't worth while to make a *dug-out;* an' besides, the rapids would have been right-down dangerous to

such a craft; so we held on to the water-course, an' went into the woods when needful.

"I can't rightly say where we were about the sixth morning after taking the forest; but on that day we sat to breakfast, of cold monkey and lizards' eggs, just at the head of a thundering rapid, that skirled and whizzed in a manner quite pretty to look at from the bank. I can't help thinking the muelle has been changed of late, for they tell us there's a big rapid just below as it stands now, an' I kinder fancy that's the spot we chose to breakfast in."

"The present muelle of the Serebpiqui," I said, "has certainly a big rapid just below it. The channel is hard under the left-hand bank, an' there's quite an island of snags in mid-stream."

"That's the golfired place! I remember them snags well, all twisted up together like a net, an' holding long gray reeds that twine like rock-snakes in the water. We were sitting, as I said, upon a fallen tree that overstood the river someway. It didn't rest flat, for the broken crown held it up; in front was a thick curtain of snags an' flood-rubbish, not solid, but nigh so. Suddintly, as we sat there—Jed and Gregory smoking an' laughing at one end, while I baited for guapotés at the other—three or four rifles cracked on the other bank, an' I heerd the 'swish' of a bullet mighty close to my pictur'. O' course we dropped straight, for, hit or missed, that's allurs the safe thing to do when there's shooting round in which one don't take no interest; but poor Jed an' Gregory never rose agin. Gregory fell backwards off the log dead as a parish ghost; while poor Jed fell on his face into the water, an' plunging about, got swept into the current an' down the rapid.

"I wasn't hurt a mite, but I felt kinder mad; so I slipt down beside Gregory's body, got all the rifles into my claws, chose a loophole through the drift, an' waited. Thunder! I seem to look on that reach now, just as it were while I 'possumed for them murdering Greasers! The day was deathly still, as on

those levels it mostly is at noon-tide; there wasn't a breath stirring in the thick-pressed leaves, nor a motion, except where a bough dragged in the racing water. Up the stream an' down, nothing but blue sky, an' gleaming swirls, an' leaves that glittered in the still sunshine. No bird nor beast came out in those hours of silent heat. Great fish swam slowly round in the dead-water by the bank, under shade of rocks an' glossy boughs: one would have taken oath they were the only waking things for miles. I heerd no noise except the beat an' the shrieking of the rapid, an' presently the sharp buzz of flies already clustering round.

"But here an' there the sun-rays shot through overhanging boughs into deep hollows, where the back-eddy slept an' rotted from flood to flood. In such a gleam, after ten minutes of ghastly silence, made more stilly by the roaring of the rapid, I suddintly caught sight of a pallid face, that looked as scared as a Padre's in an earthquake. Then a head was pushed through the leaves, an' a pair of yellow eyes stared across—a green-faced cuss! There's two more of you somewheres, I thought—bound to be! An' I'll mark every mother's son! So I waited. Presently a small canoe came pushing out from a white flowering bush. Three of 'em was in it; an' those Greasers made more noise about crossing a brook than all Walker's army would have raised in shooting the rapid. But it was all as paddles could do to take 'em over, for the stream was sluicing down like a mill-race; but at last, keeping her bows allurs up, an' working for life, they got into dead-water, an' came towards me larfing.

"About a yard from shore, two of 'em shipped their paddles, an' the bowman stood up. That was my count. I took the steersman first, to overset the canoe, an' his forehead I marked as right as a compass. He threw up the paddle, swung over the canoe, an' was swept off slick. The other two were not so much in the stream, but before they reached shore I dropped another. The third rifle, which was Jed's, missed fire. I pulled agin, an' missed agin, an' by that time the Greaser had touched ground.

His *gaspipe* [rifle] had gone with the canoe, an' he stood looking the durnedest fool, so that I larfed out. But the cuss began to handle his machete ugly; an' so, not to waste time, I gave him a New Orleans slipper between his eyes. The good old bowie whizzed like a Pawnee arrow, an' sliced his headpiece up to the '*y*.'

"Why not handle him with yer clubbed rifle?" asked Vansten.

"Durned good reason for that, Yank! There's few would stand a chance so agin one of them Costa Rican peons with his machete—I'll say that for 'em. It's a weapon I don't make much 'count of, is a clubbed rifle.

"Wal, the Greaser dropped in his track, an' I had to pull hard to get the old knife out. Then I took his machete an' two or three gold dollars he had about him, an' pitched his body into the stream. Heavens! how slick it flashed an' rolled through rocks, an' snags, an' dashing water! After that, I picked up poor Gregory, stretched him on the trunk, piled all the drift around, an' set it afire. I knew 'twas dangerous, for there's keen woodsmen in Costa Rica; but I couldn't leave an old mate to the Turkey-buzzards. When the wood was fairly blazing, I made into the forest, an' sat down to think.

"There wasn't much choice of roads, so I struck out a straight course for the San Juan. Three days I kept steadily northward, an' nothing particular happened; but after the very first night, I felt there was something on my track. I hadn't seen living man since I left the river; I wasn't much afeard of Guatusos in them parts, an' more'n that, I knew any Ind'an would have fixed me long since. But I was sure, though I had sot eyes on nothing nor heerd any sound exactly, I was sure my trail was followed: we've lived too long among Ind'ans not to know the signs of that knowledge, which is more than eyesight or hearing. How can I say what it is? But this I tell you—if any man means to do well in the woods, an' to keep his life in, he must have some sense more than eyes or ears to trust to; an' that sense warned

me now. Perhaps I'd seen the waving of the bushes on my track, when no wind stirred in the hollow wood; perhaps I'd thought to hear the crack of broken sticks as a heavy foot pressed on them; perhaps, through my shut eyes at night, I'd seen great green lamps glaring on my face, an', wakening in the black stillness, had heerd a stealthy rustle of undergrowth. On the third morning, I said to myself, 'You're tracked by a lion, boy; there's a lion on your trail at this moment!' An' I turned cold all over. I went round on the back-track. It weren't needed to go fur. Within ten yards o' the camp, my footprints of yesterday were hidden by a broad round pad, with a little heap of soil thrown behind.* Last night's trail, too, for dew still lay in the deep hollow. I took the back-track for a mile, maybe, thinking as like as not there were two of the varmin. Once or twice, the prints seemed confused an' tangled, as if the beast had gone into the bush, an' come back to roll himself an' paddle all about; or else it had been a pair of them at play. After half an hour, I turned round, feeling more like a sinner than other men, an' most greatly in want of praying for.

"About a hundred yards from the turn, my eyes suddintly got a sight that stopped me dead like as Ind'an sign on the Prieto—there was new prints atop of the old track, an' *turned the other way!* Great thunder! the varmin was on my trail agin—at that very minute he was watching me from out of some black bush. I went on after a while, for, yer see, it were nothing worse than I knew already, only more startling like; but before reaching camp, on throwing a look behind, I saw—thunder! it were an ugly

* Although the puma is an animal very much smaller than the jaguar, its paws are generally as large. The only difference, so far as the author could ever note, between the track of the one and the other, is a small, very small, heap of earth which the puma always throws behind each footprint. This peculiarity is not very generally known, except among woodsmen; and some of our naturalists have expressed doubt about the fact. The author, however, can certify it; he has several times watched the peculiar gait of the puma, and marked the manner in which the earth is thrown up.

His *gaspipe* [rifle] had gone with the canoe, an' he stood looking the durnedest fool, so that I larfed out. But the cuss began to handle his machete ugly; an' so, not to waste time, I gave him a New Orleans slipper between his eyes. The good old bowie whizzed like a Pawnee arrow, an' sliced his headpiece up to the '*y*.'

"Why not handle him with yer clubbed rifle?" asked Vansten.

"Durned good reason for that, Yank! There's few would stand a chance so agin one of them Costa Rican peons with his machete—I'll say that for 'em. It's a weapon I don't make much 'count of, is a clubbed rifle.

"Wal, the Greaser dropped in his track, an' I had to pull hard to get the old knife out. Then I took his machete an' two or three gold dollars he had about him, an' pitched his body into the stream. Heavens! how slick it flashed an' rolled through rocks, an' snags, an' dashing water! After that, I picked up poor Gregory, stretched him on the trunk, piled all the drift around, an' set it afire. I knew 'twas dangerous, for there's keen woodsmen in Costa Rica; but I couldn't leave an old mate to the Turkey-buzzards. When the wood was fairly blazing, I made into the forest, an' sat down to think.

"There wasn't much choice of roads, so I struck out a straight course for the San Juan. Three days I kept steadily northward, an' nothing particular happened; but after the very first night, I felt there was something on my track. I hadn't seen living man since I left the river; I wasn't much afeard of Guatusos in them parts, an' more'n that, I knew any Ind'an would have fixed me long since. But I was sure, though I had sot eyes on nothing nor heerd any sound exactly, I was sure my trail was followed: we've lived too long among Ind'ans not to know the signs of that knowledge, which is more than eyesight or hearing. How can I say what it is? But this I tell you—if any man means to do well in the woods, an' to keep his life in, he must have some sense more than eyes or ears to trust to; an' that sense warned

me now. Perhaps I'd seen the waving of the bushes on my track, when no wind stirred in the hollow wood; perhaps I'd thought to hear the crack of broken sticks as a heavy foot pressed on them; perhaps, through my shut eyes at night, I'd seen great green lamps glaring on my face, an', wakening in the black stillness, had heerd a stealthy rustle of undergrowth. On the third morning, I said to myself, 'You're tracked by a lion, boy; there's a lion on your trail at this moment!' An' I turned cold all over. I went round on the back-track. It weren't needed to go fur. Within ten yards o' the camp, my footprints of yesterday were hidden by a broad round pad, with a little heap of soil thrown behind.* Last night's trail, too, for dew still lay in the deep hollow. I took the back-track for a mile, maybe, thinking as like as not there were two of the varmin. Once or twice, the prints seemed confused an' tangled, as if the beast had gone into the bush, an' come back to roll himself an' paddle all about; or else it had been a pair of them at play. After half an hour, I turned round, feeling more like a sinner than other men, an' most greatly in want of praying for.

"About a hundred yards from the turn, my eyes suddintly got a sight that stopped me dead like as Ind'an sign on the Prieto—there was new prints atop of the old track, an' *turned the other way!* Great thunder! the varmin was on my trail agin—at that very minute he was watching me from out of some black bush. I went on after a while, for, yer see, it were nothing worse than I knew already, only more startling like; but before reaching camp, on throwing a look behind, I saw—thunder! it were an ugly

* Although the puma is an animal very much smaller than the jaguar, its paws are generally as large. The only difference, so far as the author could ever note, between the track of the one and the other, is a small, very small, heap of earth which the puma always throws behind each footprint. This peculiarity is not very generally known, except among woodsmen; and some of our naturalists have expressed doubt about the fact. The author, however, can certify it; he has several times watched the peculiar gait of the puma, and marked the manner in which the earth is thrown up.

MARRIAGE OUT WEST.

AS to merriage," said Beasley, tearing the lead off a fresh plug with his teeth; "as to merriage, I've practised it as largely as most men that don't keep a bank account, an' I tell *you* it ain't no 'count in our way of life. Yer see, there's mostly two sorts of weemen—firstwise, them as has certificates gained by extr'ornary an' etarnal cleverness at college; an' that's the sort of woman as worries a man's life out. Secondwise, them as has no certificates, neither diplomas, not because they think 'em gasbags, but because they ha'n't even that small wit needed to earn 'em; that's the sort as worries a man's soul out. There air another specess—ay, by thunder! nigh another sex—the sex of which our mothers were; but I've on'y met with one speci-woman of that sort."

"But surely," I said, "among the families of the squatters there must be good hearty girls who'd make a fellow happy on his own clearing?"

"That's so," said Frazer—"that's so! But Jem's right for all that. If young men went westwards for their wives, they'd find such as they could live with, an' be happy; but they go east or to easterny folk; they fall wild of a seminary diploma an' a high-bosimmed gown; they merry the gal inside, an' after a while make tracks to do the whole thing over agin. Guess there's no country in the world where bigamy is so frequent as in the westerny states, an' I'll swear it's not from any nat'ral immorality on the part o' the young men. Yer see, the great pint is this—

men air so independent in the West. Mark here! When a young fellow's merried in Europe or in the Easterny states, he merrys for good an' all; things must go mighty bad with him before he will slope off from his home an' business, though his wife should be a right-down plague-bug. But it's not so with us. A young man thinks no more of clearing out an' seeking fortune a thousand miles away, than he do of jumping a ditch. What I say is—you can't lay down salted an' smoke-dried rules for the social politics of the great West. Space, an' health, an' human natur's dead agin the principle."

"I have always had some such theory myself," I said.

"As to bigamy, in course I have no vote for that, nor has any other man; but as we don't defend it, an' as Jem himself don't defend it, let's hear some of his exper'ences; for Jem's gizzard melts like butter in a praira-fire when he's hitched a belt of dust round his waist, an' he sees a sheep-faced gal."

"Wal, boys, I'll tell yer my first ventur' in merriage—an almighty tall ventur' that were. 'Twas in St. Louis. Her father, my ventur's father, kept a dry-goods store in that city, where he kept himself balanced all day betwixt a cocktail an' a fraudulent bankruptcy. The daughter was tall an' fattish, with the most delicatest expression ever you see; her dress came up tight under her ears, an' she'd a screamed out painful if her own mother had sot eyes on her feet. When I was interjuiced, she says to me, 'Air you indeed a pioneer?'

"'My father were a pioneer, miss,' said I.

"'An' air you indeed his son, the son of a pioneer which have carried our starry flag into the wilderness, an'—an' fixed it up there?'

"'Guess I am, miss,' I says; 'father thinks so, an' mother don't say contrair.'

"She throwed her eyes to heving, as if to fix up a new constellation, an' kind o' raptured. I didn't make no remark, because I thought she belonged to some 'private connection,'

an' were holding prayer. So she brings her eyes down agin, an' says she, 'Oh!'

"'Yes,' I observes, 'that's all so.'

"I kind o' sot to her after that, for I thought she were the gollfiredest fool in the neighbourhood, or else I were. I'm bent now to think it were rayther the latter way about, for she pioneered me into church, an' her father pioneered five hundred dollars out of my belt. About a week after merriage, we went down to a neat little farm as my father had given me to set up in. So says she, when she sees the loghouse, 'Air this the pioneer's hut?'

"'No,' I said; 'this is a kind o' farmhouse, where I hope we'll live many a year together with our sons an' daughters.' An' so I did hope—strapeddle me if I didn't.

"'Oh, don't talk so wicked,' says she, blushin' like a startled cochineal.

"When, she got inside, an' see there was but two rooms, an' no door betwixt 'em, an' a man about the clearing, she scrimmied out like a trapped rabbit: 'Oh! I never! I never can—do—do—you must make a door instant, suddin. Curtain? O dear! O no! Do pioneers allus live so?'

"'Guess they do, all as I've known,' said I, kind o' gruffly; for my dear old mother had lived all her life in just such a shanty, an' my sisters had grown up so, an' been lotted off with five thousand dollars apiece to just like homes, an' I didn't take to such faldoodle. 'Don't you think, my gal,' I says to her, 'as your husband 'll call on you to do what's wrong. As my mother lived you can live, an' I hope you may prove as modest an' as great-hearted as she was.'

"'Naow, it's no use being mad, mister! I've the temper of a lamb, but my way I kind o' must have in the house. We've only been merried a week, but I ain't happy now, an' I can't ever be with a man as don't consider the delicatedness of my feelin's.' An' then she began to cry.

"I think now that maybe I was hard on her, brought up as she

had been ; but the real fact is, it were a durnation bit of folly from end to end. What business, as Frazer says, has a Westerny man with a Yankee wife? It's the general contrairiness of natur', I suppose. The Yankee-bred gal falls sick for the squatter's broad shoulders an' big limbs, an' the squatter falls wild of the trimness an' little delicacies of the gal. Then they merry ; an' arter a while miss finds her husband's shoulders too broad an' too big for her minikin little arms, an' the squatter perceives there is not room enough in her mind for him to turn about in ; an' so, some fine day, he takes his rifle an' two or three dollars may be, an' moves out.

"That was the end of my first ventur'. The gal began to cry, sitting on the door-jamb. Now, I hate, an' most of us hate, a woman's crying. I've heerd some folks say they cannot resist tears, an' I daresay that's true enough, if they're reasonable, an' the woman knows what she wants ; but as a rule, one don't like them who can't keep the plugs in. Kind o' just, too, it is ! A gal who cries when she's not hurt, ain't likely to make prize 'sass,' an' a gal who don't cry *till* she's hurt, don't usually care to cry then. However, I didn't want to quarrel with my wife inside a week of merriage—specially a first ventur'—so I fixed up some planks for a door. But I knowed I'd done wrong, for the old man he said to me when I told him I was in a string : 'Jem, my son, don't yer do it ! But if yer must !' says he tremenjously, 'pull down her back-hair at the altar, an' curse free ; hit her father in the eye, an' stamp on her grandmother's corns. With a Yankee gal, the great thing is to *start fair*.' I hadn't done it, for I hadn't spunk, an' she did look so etarnal mild an' melting, like all natur' in a thaw. But I knew I wasn't starting fair with that gal.

"We lived together on the farm for nigh two years, an' I lost forty-four pound-weight during that time. She was right down good about the house, I say that ; neat as an' egg, an' allurs did the washing comfortable ; but I felt cramped an' stifled with her : she were no companion for a Westerny man. I tried everything

I could think of, from a course of Scriptur' to a hickory switch, but she couldn't be welded to our notions. She was small, that's the fact; so at last I took out a hundred dollars, an' I said to her, 'I'm going off, an' it's likely we shall meet no more! I give yer this old farm, which my brothers an' I cleared—a good farm it is, an' I'm loath to leave it; I give yer eight hundred dollars in money, an' every fixing about the place. I b'lieve you've done your best to be a good wife; but I don't think, when you come to age, as you'll lay much blame on me for my shortcomings; I've done my best too. But we don't weld together, an' we never shall: it's best to part, an' part friendly.'

"She didn't believe me, but larfed provoking—her little, craking, Yankee larf—an' said: 'You won't go till you've fixed me up that new chicken-pen.'

"'''Twere done this morning,' I said; 'an' the fences are all in order, an' the timber drawn from the new clearing.'

"So I took my rifle an' bowie, an' started for the Prieto."

"And you've never seen your wife since?" I asked.

"Nary once. I had a letter some time after, which were a moral piece of writing. She wanted me to come back, 'because the neighbours looked on her so. It was etarnal lonely of an evening, the help didn't do his work, an' 'twould all be so much nicer if I'd come home.' I wrote to her: 'It 'twan't worth while to vacate my "prospect" to cowhide her help.'"

"That's the story of many a Westerny man," said Frazer, kicking up the fire; "but taking the lump of them, I expect they're the finest creturs on this side etarnity. You've been an' lived among 'em, sir, an' you know. Where can such men be found—such big chests, such wild-cat spunk, an' such good hearts? I take it, they've the noblest mission of humanity to fulfil—the mission of progress and of freedom! True liberty is better understood an' more heartfelt by those shaggy, rough-grained woodsmen, than by yer shirt-bosomed store-keepers an' yer ranty legislatures. Thank God for Westerny men, for what would

America an' the future be without 'em? Honesty still lives in the praira, an' virtue, an' honour, an' contentment. Rough-grained we are; a swearing, drinking, loud-voiced lot of rowdies we are called; but to us has been given the revelation of liberty. They don't understand us, sir, down East; an' thunder! that's no hardship. The polished citizen of New York, seeing a bowie in every old wife's carving-knife, goes about among us with his greasy hands outspread, an' his lying mouth agape, frightened to larf, fearful to drink, an' downright death-smitten if asked to take a hand at euchre. I wonder he don't have prayers put up in the meetin'-house, an' burn a blue-light on his doorway, when he gets back safe from among those 'arful savages.'"

"I'll tell yer another advantage they enjoy out West," said Vansten: "they've high-prime gas laid on to every house, an' portable burners for travelling. If it's all as yer say, how comes it the best part of yer have two or three wives belongin' to yer, not to mention Indian squaws an' cotton merriages?"

"Wal, I admit it's bad, but not *so* bad as may seem at first sight. I guess it's very rare for any Westerny man, except a right-down bad egg, such as are among all peoples, to merry a gal without letting her know as he's gone through a ceremony curiously sim'lar several times before. It's a bad business at the best, I s'pose; but, to my mind, it makes a durned sight o' difference whether a man deceives the gal by lying oaths, or whether he tells her straight out that he's a married man already, but don't downright object to going through the operation agin. She may take it or leave it, I guess!"

"I should like to hear more of your experiences, Beasley," I said.

"You're welcome to all my pile betwixt this an' bedtime. As to Frazer's gas, its etarnal pretty hearing, an' reminds me muchly of 'Whisky Fence' talk at Christmas-time; but it aren't in my way to say whether it's all true or not.

"Wal, boys, I picked up a genteel plunder on the Prieto; an'

after six months, I come down the mountains to look round an' spend it. 'Most the foremost female gender I see in San Francisco was a little milliner gal, an' her first glance rolled me over like a buffalo-calf, so golfired pretty she were! I made up to her right away; an' arter a week or two, showed my dust, an' asked her to have me.

"'Air you merried?' asks she.

"'Not much,' I says.

"So she larfs. 'How much?'

"'On'y once.'

"'Once is about enough for a body, I guess,' she says larfing.

"'My wife were only a woman, quite in the ord'nary walk of natur',' I said; 'but I've great hopes in housekeeping from a full-grown angel.'

"She wouldn't hear of it nohow; but she let me take care of her when she walked out, an' all that, for I tell *you* no feminine gender, short of a howling monkey or a bishop's lady, were safe in San Francisco at that time. She was Mossoora born, too, an' I'd heerd of her people; but they moved eastwards when the old man died, an' her mother was biding in New York. But I didn't seem to make much way for more 'n two months. I was so desperate taken, that if any man had cornered her or talked low to her in my seeing, I'd have put lightning through him, though he'd been my own mate. But one day, when we was sitting by the window in her own little room, she said to me: 'Jem! what would *you* think of me if I merried you?' Her innocent eyes were fixed upon my face, an' for a minute I felt choked like. 'My darling!' I said, 'nothing that you or I could do would make my love greater; but I'd like to have the right for to pertect you. Settle it, dear, in your own heart where there's feelings I can't jine in. You should be my wife as truly an' as faithfully as if there was no other woman in the world; but God forbid I should make you wretched or lead you agin your conscience! Darling,' I said, 'no man as loves a gal, an' has true grit, could

give advice to her in such a cause. Fix it how you may, I shall never think of you but as the gal I would have loved best for my wife out of the whole world.' An' I left her to herself.

"Wal, we was merried; an' the year I passed with her was the happiest time I ever had. No one knew my first wife was living, an' Lucy was as cheery as if she had forgotten all about it. Luck went with me in every 'prospect' I made, an' I'd collected a big plunder, intending to buy a farm up Nevada-way, when, one night, just twelve months after we was merried, the banker vamosed with my dust. Then I fell ill with the calentura, an' Lucy spent all her savings on me. When I picked up so far as to get out agin, my luck was gone. I fell back an' back with fever, my 'prospects' was all blank, an' I felt half-minded to hire myself out as help, to keep Lucy an' our child. At last, when every cent was gone, an' all things desperate with us, she received a letter from her friends offering her the chance of living with them in New York.

"I made her go! I saw her aboard the steamer, an' there we parted for ever. She died within six months, an' the child also. I s'pose I was raving mad for some weeks after she left me. Ye see, sir, folks show grief differently. Maybe it wouldn't occur to you to get drunk, if yer heart felt empty, nor to go picking quarrels an' rowdying, because you were full of grief an' love; but that's what I did, an' twere wise for me too. The end of it came pretty soon, of course. I fell among the Samaritans one night, an' they split my head with a bowie, an' put a bullet through my shoulder. After that, I got better, an' could attend to business within a month."

"And what did you engage in?" I asked.

He laughed hoarsely. "I followed the banking business for some time. I followed it to Panama, an' then to Lima, an' then back to Chagres, where I caught it up."

"I mind hearing of that," said Frazer, spitting out his "plug.' "The Chagres fever had me at the time; but I was within fifty

yards of you then, Jem, though we didn't meet for ten years after."

"What did he do?" I asked Frazer, in a low tone, for Beasley was staring hard into the fire.

"Met young Collins in a bar-room at Chagres, an' shot him down.—Now then, Vansten, you're first out; an' mind yer, if yer see a tiger, don't scare him, because I've promised a skin to little Dolores."

INDIOS BRAVOS.*

THE Aztec children?" said Vansten one night. "Why, see here, sir," laying his freshly-shaped plug impressively on my arm: " I guess I had acquaintaince with that 'do' from its first hatch to the full fledging, when it soared up the empyrean, and alighted in the high class palaces of England. The durned little Sambos! They were born, sir, at Decora, in San Salvador. I knew old Burgos, their father, an' Christina Espina, their mother, an' I'd have been acquainted with their grand-parents if they'd had any in partic'lar. The children were just common Sambos; an' if scientific folk knew their business, they'd ha' seen these were not a mite more cur'ous than an almighty pile of sim'lar virmin thereabouts. A Spaniard got 'em first, but he lost heart, an' sold them to the Down-Easter for one-hundred dollars apiece. They said down to Chagres as it were dear flesh; but Yankee smartness hadn't been rightly measured then. Why, I hear the pair is going to be merried! It's high prime joking, that is!"

* The author feels that he should give his authorities for this story. It is confirmed by several independent narratives. Firstly, by the report of two Costa Rican peons, who crossed the Frio country in deserting from Colonel Cauty in Castillo Viejo. Secondly, by the report of the commandante of San Carlos, who, in 1849, made a most disastrous expedition against these Indians. Thirdly, by the report given by the survivors of a "prospecting" party, who marched from the Costa Rican side in 1860. Fourthly, from the report of Captain Parker of Greytown, who ascended the Frio River in 1863, accompanied by three Frenchmen. In San José de Costa Rica and in Greytown, the author has seen some most extraordinary specimens of gold brought by these parties from the Guatuso country. The description of the Indian sacred places is singularly suggestive of those in Chontales, now ruinous.

"That's so," said Frazer, thoughtfully—"that's all so; but the Itzimaya—it may be fact, for all that. Tell yer what it is, boys!" raising his head; "this age is getting that dang'rously keen an' clever, it'll lose all its little wits soon! Now, I'd like to hear—it's what I never heerd yet—why the scientific folk who've backed their own nonsense with all they could pick up of other people's, should deny the Itzimaya? Do they, or does any man, know ought of that country beyond the fancy lines they put in maps to prettify them up? Has any one of them been up the Usumacinta or the Lacandon? What living being has come back from westwards of Peten? We here, at this moment, are camped upon a stream that no man has ascended, an' we have before us a two-hundred league stretch which Nicaragua has never explored, an' no white mortal has traversed. Guatemala is full of savage districts that the *Conquistadores* didn't enter, and the Greasers daren't approach. Costa Rica ha'n't the spunk to use its own Atlantic shore, for fear of Guatosos an' Talamancas. What, in thunder, do these little frog-backed, ratan-legged, rabbit-faced professors mean by preaching to us—us who've made our larning with eyes an' skin? If I say there's the Eldorado within fifty miles of the Howard House in Aspinwall, ay, right 'twixt Aspinwall and Panama, within ten miles of their scientific railway—dare any man go to see! It makes me right down mad sometimes to hear folks gas! You may take my word for it, sir, an' *I* don't mostly talk of things I don't know somewhat about—there's room for ten Itzimayas in the unexplored parts of Guatemala alone. Mind yer, I don't say there's a single one, but I'll be right happy to volunteer with you, if you'll make a party to look for it—I'll say that."

"If the Mayas caught you, they'd skin that carcass of yours quick time," said Vansten.

"Wal, if they take off my skin they won't find much to eat," replied Frazer, stretching his sinewy arm. "I'd advance science muchly out there, I guess, with this superior preparation of bones!"

"By the way," I said to Beasley, "you fell in with the Guatusos once, didn't you! Frazer spoke of it the other night."

"I did so! Likewise fell out with one of 'em, kerslash, sharp as a Yankee girl with toothache.—Now, look ye here, Double Dutch! I'm bound to shoot when riled, an' that's not considered friendly in a general way; so don't you put in any of your durned pepper-sauce, because this story allurs roughs my skin.

"Frazer told you all about Santa Rosa, an' how we split up after that awakening. I cottoned to four others, all good men, and we made a merry track for the San Carlos, which was reached safe enough; but nary speckle of gold did we find on the way. The night before starting down I said, 'See here how this is, boys! I'm not going back to Walker with neither scalps nor plunder—not for shame's sake! There's gold here somewheres, and I'm bound to have my lot in this universe wherever there's lot to be had. Now, I ask no man to follow—we're all free Rangers, I take it—but to-morrow morning I shall start for the Rio Frio; an' them who don't notion that voyage can go down the San Carlos, an' I hope they'll arrive safe to pray for me'"——

"Wait a moment," I interrupted. "Here's a map. Let's see exactly where we are."

"I learned my geography mostly on my two legs," said Beasley, "but it's mighty easy to understand this. Here's the broad San Juan running from the Lake of Nicaragua to Greytown. Going up that stream from the Atlantic, the first fair-sized river one comes across on the Costa Rican bank is the Serebpiqui here; forty miles above that is the San Carlos, an' there isn't another as far as the lake, you see. But opposite Fort San Carlos here—nothing to do with the river of like name, mind yer—about three hundred yards from the spot where the big San Juan flows out of the lake, is marked the mouth of a large river called the Frio, flowing *into* it. You'll note that the genius who made this map—an' he did *make* it too, every bit of it—has given the full windings of the Frio, marked the mountains an' all other pretty things, but

over the whole is scored 'utterly unexplored,' which is nigh the only truth in his pictur'. All the land from the Merivalles Mountains to the San Carlos, ay, an' as fur as Greytown on the other bank, they say, is inhabited by a drive of 'Indios bravos,' called 'Guatusos' by the Greasers, an' 'Pranzos' by the Kingmen. No one knows aught about them, for they're quiet enough if left alone; but there they squat, half across the continent, free as Irishmen at election time, blocking the Atlantic coast an' the San Juan, an' playing etarnal destiny with all the parties that have been sent against them. Now you see how the land lay to us from the *muelle* of the San Carlos."

"But why do you notion there's diggins on the Frio, Pike?" asked Vansten.

"Wal, I've not studied muchly, yer see, through being born strong and clever, but I hear tell that the Conquistadores found the bullion here in piles like nat'ral elevations. The Ind'ans ate an' drank an slept on gold an' jewels likewise, an' I want to know where that metal came from. Not from Chontales—for there's no washings there, at least not known, an' nary sign of Ind'an mining; not from Segovia—for those diggings scarcely pay for wasted water; not from any part of Nicaragua; nor, I'll mostly take oath, from Mosquito; so where did it come from? Can you tell me that, boy? I say it came from the Frio, an' that I'll kinder prove.

"We had a long talk that night, quite friendly, but three of the party would not take the woods. Segur jumped up when first I spoke, saying, 'I'm with yer, Jem, to make a pile or lose a scalp!' Next day the other three—good men they was—started down the river on a little raft, after giving us all their spare cartridges an' a machete. We watched them round the reach, an' then tracked off to the north-west.

"The woods was tall and close, as if they'd not been fired since Ind'an times, but the sun glinted through the tree-tops with that bright glare only seen in the lake forests. There is a greenish sort of twilight under shadow of the trees in some parts, but round the

Lake of Nicaragua the air is always white an' glistering. Eh ! sir, what can home-staying folk know of real excitement? Some there is among them who lose breath at sight of a stinking newspaper; others get powerful nervous on catching a glimpse of white shoulders an' scented frocks, but the blood of a true man rises hottest an' quickest in the dazzling shade of an Ind'an wood, where, as he knows well, every bush may hold an enemy; where, from minute to minute, the yellow skin an' shining eyes of a savage may rise suddintly to his sight in the bright silent sunlight. Night brings no stupid lethargy to him. In the white moonbeams or the ebony shadow, his enemy must be watched, for the game has life for its stake, an' allurs, allurs the chances of the cards are agin the civilised man ! Mind yer, I don't say as the excitement ain't just a leetle too 'neat' to be wholesome drinking sometimes.

"But Segur was as good a friend as could be wished for the Ind'an trail—strong as a grisly, hearty as a jaguar, and square all ways like a yard o' wall. We travelled warily for three days, an' then a little creek was crossed, where we washed the mud: there was gold at bottom of the cup, as much as would cover a *dime.* I'd never seen such prospecting as that, barring one or two claims at old Washo. We stayed there four days to make *charqui* from the flesh of a cimaron I shot, an' then pressed on agin, skeary that the Pranzos should see our smoke an' sign. At that creek, I mind seeing a fight between a black-snake an' a rattler, which were pretty to intelligent bystanders.

"Fust day after leaving that prospect, we crossed a track, shod, but with toes inturned like Ind'an.—Can you tell me, sir, why all savages turn their feet inwards, while we turn 'em out? They do it, every race of 'em, but the Lord alone knows why; unless it's been revealed to some of yer scientifics who travel the world round in a back parlour, and foot out the universe from their front entry.

"Four days more we voyaged without seeing sign of Ind'an, nor meeting any danger to speak of, though tigers, *damars,* an' pumas seemed thick there as turkey buzzards round a slaughter-

yard. We was getting to feel quite a confidence in the institootions of the land, when, one afternoon, Segur caught my arm suddintly, an' dropped. So did I, o' course. Then voices reached our ears, sounding closer and closer, an' then dying away. After a quarter of an hour, when all was still, we rose up. Fifty yards further was an Ind'an road, not unlike them tracks cut by black ants, but multiplied by human natur'. It was deep cut in the earth, three or four feet maybe, and all the tracks in it were shod; not even a child's naked foot among 'em, nor sign of any dog, which made us cock our hats, I guess, an' think small things of Providence. We jumped across, an' on the other side Segur said to me, 'It's getting warm, Jem!' 'Which way does that road lead, d'ye notion?' 'Towards one of the rabbit-warrens on the Frio, I should guess. Shall we go for tu see how things air done in them secluded grots, Jem?' 'Why,' I said, after thinking matters over, 'it won't be safe to tramp by daylight now, an' the Guatusos arn't likely to travel at night; no forest Ind'ans do. This road is bound to lead Frio way. It's plain they don't take dogs on the travel with them, if they have any at all. What do you say?' 'If you're the man to lead, I'm the one to follow,' says Segur. So we lay down in the bushes, an' I took watch for the first three hours. Several parties passed along, as could be heerd, but we were safer there than we'd ha' been further off, always barring dogs. Towards two o'clock I woke Segur, an' lay down till dusk; and then we jumped into the road to tramp along the shadowed side, with eyes and ears skinned, I tell yer. Just at dawn, we came to a town or village, an' scrambled into the bush sharp as rabbits; but the location was found to be a swamp, and durned uncomfortable lying. Deeper an' deeper we went on, for it wouldn't do to camp too close, with children running round, an' maybe Indian dogs about, sharp-eyed an' vicious as country virtue. We camped so far off that I can't say much of the town, more than that it was rounded with a high palisade, an' over that was tall thatched roofs, an' palm-trees, an' standard poles. On t'other side we strove

to hit the road, but couldn't find a track. But a creek was struck, an' there agin we 'found ile,' but not so free as before. Up the bank we went along some way, until reaching a lot of plantain patches an' thatch-built huts, which, I guess were the town farms, but only used when the fruit crop was gathered, for though we didn't go near them, there was no 'sign' about. Next night, we struck another road, an' travelling over it, was mighty nearly caught by a late Ind'an. I was just sniggering at some joke of Segur's when voices was heerd in front. To get out was impossible, for it chanced that the wood was thin there, an' our figures must have been seen on the ridge, so we dropped along in the black shadow, squeezing to the bank. They came on, two men, talking loud, an', as it seemed to us, drunk. One of 'em stumbled over my head, giving me a kick like a horse, but the other laughed; an' they passed on, poor cusses, never knowing how near they'd been to their last kick in this world's shoes. Better watch was kept after that.

"So things went for a fortnight. We used the road as far as was safe, an' passed one or two towns much like the first, so fur as could be seen. One morning—I mind that day well—we was tramping along wearily enough, for our belts was heavy with gold; said Segur to me: 'We must be nigh the Frio, hoss! There's big travel over them superfine roads, an' the Cold River can't be far away, I take it.' He'd scarce finished, when he shot slash into the water, right overhead; an' when I fished him out, and prospected through the bushes, we found ourselves on the bank of a slow muddy stream, some sixty yards across. 'That's the Frio,' said I; 'did you find it cold, old man?' An' then we went to sleep, cheerier than since leaving the San Carlos.

"That afternoon we prospected all round, an' found the dust in bucketfuls. 'If this goes on so,' says Segur, 'we'll need a contract and a bellcart to carry the plunder.' Every cup gave big pay, an' in twenty-four hours we'd a'most more than could be stowed. Our buttons bust one by one, we were that proud. But

at dawn, in rounding a little bend, we came suddintly upon an Ind'an fishing. A fine tall fellow he were; six feet high, light-coloured, an' handsome, with a head of long black hair that hung down his back like a horse-tail. 'Comanche chief, by thunder!' muttered Segur; an' he did look just that. He stood upon a little raft, stark naked, with a tiger's skin between his feet.

"Before we'd got over the start, the Ind'an dropped his spear, an' snatched a bow from the raft, pointing a five-foot arrow at me. Segur dropped him slick, an' he fell into the water.

"But we were badly scared. I've seen many a 'buck,' an' I've fought free over most prairas, but such pluck as that Guatuso's I never see. 'It's time to track out, hoss, with the plunder,' said Segur. 'They call this a "Cold River," but it's too hot for our constitootion. Guess we'll make that dug-out now, quick time.' So we found a likely tree; dropped it, an' set it a-burning, an' meantime washed gold. At the end of a fortnight, we launched the craft, an' drifted down stream. Queer things I saw on that v'yage, though it was but seven days long. The banks were thick with plantains, an' here and there was a little hut, built of three poles, like a dog-kennel. There was deep-cut roads, too, that opened on the river, an' at every such wharf, if one may call 'em so, a ferry-raft was moored. Maybe you've seen a Guatuso boat, sir; they find 'em on the lake sometimes, an' floating down the San Juan. It is a raft made of two boughs tied fast together with ratans, an' about twenty-eight inches square. The Guatuso stands upright upon it, an' steers about with a long paddle—at least I reckon so. Those we saw on the Frio were handsome little craft, carved an' painted all over, with a crutch at each corner, ornamented with pretty shells. We stole one, but some Greaser cuss toted it off at San Carlos.

"We poled by night down the stream, between banks low an' swampy, that a'most gave one fever to look at; the Ind'ans all live inland on that account, I guess. But next night, the ground began to rise, an' we rested for the day beneath a low hill covered

with grey trees, that blazed at top with crimson an' yellow lianas. At dusk, we got under way agin, an' just as the full moon rose, passed through a sort of gorge. I was peering into the black water forward, with my eyes just about skinned to see the snags, when Segur suddintly whispered: 'Great Heaven, Jem, look here!' I turned aside. We were passing a break in the canyon, where the hills smoothed down into a little praira of three or four acres maybe. Two lines o' *jicaras** grew through it, forming a cross in the middle; but all other trees had been cut down on the hills. An' on the crown of the hills an' down the sides were great piles an' squares of stone, an' over them were long lines of statues —hundreds an' thousands—shining like white marble in the moonlight. Right in our front, in the middle of the praira, were two small pyramids of *adobe* on either side of the jicara line, an' about them was a dozen tall stone figures on pedestals—some squatted on hands an' knees, others crouched with heads betwixt their shoulders like tigers, others had great mouths that seemed to gape for blood—like living devils. For we saw in a moment what this was—the burying-place of the Guatuso chiefs, an' their big temple.

"We caught hold of the branches by the bank, an' looked with all our eyes, for it's a sight as has been given to few men to behold—those mysterious places where Ind'ans still worship their devilish old gods. An' a grand sight it were—a grand sight, sir! Under the hill-shadows were *teocallis*, taller an' broader than in the centre, an' at the furthest side was a big building, low an' black. There was banners waving on tall staves, an' ribbons an' coloured cloths on the jicara-trees, that fluttered gently in the night-wind. Other things, too, was there on the trees—shapeless lumps tied to the branches, an' round white balls that glistened

* The *jicara*, or wild calabash-tree, is still reverenced by the Christian Indians of Central America; but the excuse now given for this superstition is the shape of the leaves, which grow in fours, forming always a perfect cross. The jicara has been generally noticed by the author in company with remains of the Indian religions on the mountains of Central America.

brighter than ivory. Easy we guessed what those were, for a faint an' sickly smell came in breaths across the water. The Ind'an religion was taught them by devils, the padres say, and, true it is, *they* ought to recognise all such handiwork.

"We sat in our places staring for a quarter of an hour, until suddintly a great drum was beaten in the temple, an' the war-whistles screamed out. That woke us up, an' we dropped down stream under the shadow of the trees. Six days later San Carlos was reached: we divided the plunder, an' I returned to the States for a spree while the dollars lasted. Segur went to Realejo, an' thence to San Francisco, where he's done well, I hear—a good fellow he was.

"An' that's all I can tell you of the Guatusos, boys, for I never saw but one, an' he weren't white at all. There's a fortune waiting in that land for the men as has spunk to go seek it, an' maybe we'll shake a cradle there yet, sir, in spite of Greaser governments. The golfired fools! Neither Nicaragua nor Costa Rica dare go near the river, an' yet they're just gay to fight for its possession. Only you call agin for volunteers in Greytown, sir, an' never sweat for one government or other; we'll put the matter through."

COSAS DE FILIBUSTEROS.

"I HAVE heard several reasons for Walker's final overthrow," I said one night to Beasley, "but none of them seem quite sufficient. What, in your opinion, caused the sudden hostility of the natives?"

"Wal, 'twas just the women, I guess, who ruined us.—Aren't that so, Frazer?"

"That's so, hoss! 'Twas the feminine conduct of them shecreturs as was found too trying for domestic quiet. The buck Greasers glued to us quite kindly at first, an' were right-down proud to strut about the streets of Rivas with their little yeller hands tucked under the arm of our big Rangers; but their complexions suffered dreadful when they found the women-folk were happy in a sim'lar position. I take it that's the most riling case as can be for a people when the female sort go crazy mad after foreigners, an' spite their countrymen to their faces. 'Twas hard upon us, too, for Westerny men is mostly large-sized about the heart. Then disturbances followed o' course, an' I'm bound to admit as the Greasers weren't allurs in the wrong. In Chontales, when I was there with the Nicaraguan Rangers, murder took place daily—now a Ranger stabbed, an' to-morrow a lover shot or beaten to death. What could the very best officer do to keep discipline? The women just threw themselves at our heads. But we've paid for our sins, most on us! Of all that hearty, merry corps, there is but three who escaped the massacre by Juigalpa: Captain P——, S——, an' I. Ah! But Texan boys ain't killed like rabbits, mind yer—ask the Chontales folk. For every

Ranger who fell, there was four Greasers missed at the roll-call that evening. Poor Schmit, the Dutchman, is not forgotten yet in those parts, nor won't be so long as there's yeller skins in Chontales. He died like a hero, with his back to a nipper-tree, four dead in front of him, an' five rolling wounded on the ground! Ah! who'll write the history of our war for us? I tell you, sir, though 'twas badly planned, an' a credit to no general concerned except Henningson, there was more acts of heroism, more desperate hand-to-hand fighting in Walker's struggle, than in any war since men on this continent first larned to use their hands.—Was you with us when we held Guadalupe Church in Granada, Jem?"

"No; but I was in the assault that relieved you. Thunder! that *were* a fight—tall as Goliah of Gath. Bully for both of us, Jos; for Henningson an' Walker!"

"Wal, naow," drawled Vansten, "it were spunky, I don't gainsay; but to live on the flesh of one's own mate, one's own brother, maybe, would ha' kinder seemed unnat'ral to us down East-away. O' course, it's regoolar an' holy out West, but for my own part, I'd not care to gas o' that business, if I'd been in it!"

"You *wasn't* in it, Double Dutch! Don't scrimmy up so golfired partic'lar. You was comfortable in the States, I guess, studyin' missionāry prospects in a high-moral bar-room. It ain't four hundred Yankee fools as could ha' held the bare walls of Guadalupe Church, without artillery an' without food, for nineteen days agin the whole Greaser army; an' it ain't a hundred an' seventy-five of such as you that could ha' stormed a city of ten thousand souls, nor defeated three thousand reg'lar troops. We grow rough skins out West. We aren't all things at meeting, nor pretty studies for semināry young ladies; but, Great Thunder! in fixing up a fight we use the pattern of no man! Not gas o' that siege in Granada! I'll tell the truth there, as I tell it of Santa Rosa. A victory is a victory, as a whipping is a whipping, I guess."

"But is it true," I asked, "that you lived on the bodies of the dead, although the besiegers offered you fair terms?"

"Wal, I reckon some of our boys did *so*," Frazer answered unwillingly; "but they weren't Americans. I fed mostly on tobacco an' small lizards; but the English an' the Germans could not keep up so, an' six or seven days after the siege began, there was fresh meat cooking on the fires. No man asked whence it came, or who brought it, or who eat it. Henningson said to me —I was sergeant of the Rangers—'Ask no questions, Frazer. My duty is to hold this church, an' that I'll do any way an' all ways.' He whispered: 'If any man looks ugly about this matter, take your six-shooter in hand. If he don't catch the hint, put in yer bullet;' but no one breathed a doubt.

"The church was like a Chicago pig-yard at slaughter-day. Four hundred of us took refuge there, an' for nineteen days we held it against three thousand Costa Ricans and other Greasers; but on marching out, we numbered only a hundred an' seventeen. Holes there was in the pavement knee-deep in thick blood, an' the air was just alive. Ah, boys! they're beautiful, these tropical lands! Gay, an' fragrant, an' full of flowers is their soil, dazzling bright the air, an' shot with all colours the birds, an' flies, an' insects! But death waits everywhere, hidden beneath the brightness an' the beauty; all nature's filled with horrible disease, an' pains, an' terrors, that no man can dream of without shuddering; ay, so that I pray God a friend may be always nigh to put a last bullet through this riddled carcass when I drop helpless an' wounded in the jungle!

"But we were talking of the siege in Guadalupe church.—Did you ever hear how that was raised, sir?—Spin the yarn, Beasley —you was there."

"Ay, hoss!" said the Missourian, pushing the logs together in meditative fashion, "there's few left of us now to tell that tale— few of the boys who was there; an' of them, there's some who seem ashamed of Walker's service. I don't know, Jos—I aren't

larned, an' I don't know much of these matters, right an' wrong, an' all that—but the day I blush for the old general, an' for my love of him an' long service under him, that day I hope I may die! Blush for him? What act of the old lion but was brave an' gentle? Did he ever fail to back a friend, or ever injure an enemy, except in fair fight? Did he steal, or lie, or act unmanly? What woman did Walker ever hurt? What complaint did he refuse to answer? Whose property was taken for the general's use? Ay, ay! But he was a filibuster, an' so were we who bear witness for him. Shall our words be taken in favour of a man who attackted property which is salvation? No, sir! no, no, no! What matter if Nicaragua was governed by devils, whom Walker overthrew? He was agin the dollar an' the evil one. 'Let's go murder him!' says the English an' the Yankees; an' they raced off together, strivin' each to be foremost, as if 'twere a match with piles of money on the 'track.' So the English was in first—ah! an' they murdered Walker, the brave old lion!—murdered him, at Trujillo; an' I saw it done! Lord!" cried the filibuster, springing from his seat with eyes aflame, "an' there's men was with us that day who now blush for their name, an' their old general, an' the oath they took on the sands of Trujillo! If——"

"Now, Jem, don't get mad, old hoss! Mr. Boyle here had nought to do with Walker's murder, I guess, nor Double Dutch neither! Sit down, man, an' gas away about the storming of Granada."

With a short, hard laugh, Beasley reseated himself. "You wasn't there, Jos; you didn't see the old hero fall, nor read the protest he made on the morning of his murder, or you'd ha' been mad as I. Hand the tobacco, an' I'll spin my yarn.*

"You know Granada, sir, don't you? That's the most golfired

* The author has merely endeavoured in this passage to reproduce the expressions he has heard many a time from old filibusters. There is vastly

desolation of a city ever I see; but one must own it weren't quite so bad before Henningson, the Englishman, burned the whole place to ground. They say the city did big trade at one time, seven hundred mules passing through it daily, as I've heerd; but that's a long while ago, when first the Spaniards planted out the land. Even in our time, though, Granada was not such a very poor location. The houses was all crumbling and ruinous, but they had big porches that one could drive a carriage through, an' windows barred with clever ironwork, an' gardens an' fountains in the paved courtyards. Many a siege it had undergone already since the Independence; but a population of ten thousand souls, many of them stubborn Ind'an peons, can bear a sight of Greaser pounding before it gives in. Granada was not such a poor-showing place when we attacked it that time.

"You must have noted the big 'barranca,' all thick with shrubs, an' trees, an' tangled vines, that sweeps half round the city? 'Twas made by an earthquake, no doubt, but when or how seems unknown now. Folks in Granada will tell you it's bottomless, except by Otrabanda; but that's a Greaser lie, I'll take oath. Nevertheless, there's no man but Walker would have dreamed of using that black cavern as a road. You'll remember, too, the little church half-way between the town an' lake? That's the church of Guadalupe, where Henningson an' his four hundred took refuge when their retreat was intercepted by the Costa

more truth in them than most Englishmen are prepared to receive; but this is not the place to discuss the question of Walker's invasion.

The protest alluded to is as follows:—

"*On Board H.M.S.S. Icarus, Sept.* 5, 1860.

"I hereby protest, before the civilised world, that when I surrendered to the captain of H.M.S.S. *Icarus*, that officer expressly received my sword and pistols, as well as the arms of Colonel Rundler; and the surrender was expressly, and in so many words, to him as the representative of her Britannic Majesty. "WILLIAM WALKER."

The English Captain, however, surrendered him to the savage Hondurans, and he was shot next morning without trial.

Ricans. We arrived, a hundred an' seventy-five on us, off Granada about a fortnight after the siege began; but landing was impossible in face of three thousand reg'lar troops, intrenched on the lake road; so Walker drew off agin. An' then 'twas whispered round as we was to march along the barranca, an' storm the city from Otrabanda.

"Wal, boys, you'll not think meanly of me, I know, though I say the scheme seemed right-down madness an' suicide to my mind. No man living—dead, I don't speak of, for it's a likely patch for ghosts—had entered that 'crease;' an' what was at bottom of it, or whether it had a bottom, none could rightly say. Even supposing we reached the crossing at Otrabanda in safety, supposing the noise of our march was unheerd, an' the whole durned drive of us was not buried alive by Greasers, nor swallowed up in 'quick-muds,' nor killed by snakes an' tigers—then we was to climb the bank, to storm the three barricades in the main street, fortified as they were with artillery, an' guarded night an' day—we was to attack an' 'stampede' three thousand of the best troops in Central America, Costa Ricans—to storm a hostile city of ten thousand souls—to run the gauntlet for half-a-mile to Guadalupe Church, an' to carry the survivors of Henningson's command, with their wounded, down to the lake-shore, an' embark them! There was a hundred an' seventy-five of us to do all that! Seemed kinder madness, sir, didn't it?

"But in Walker's army none was used to shirk, an' when the word was given, we entered the barranca, every man upright as his ramrod; but there was hearts beating loud among us as weren't used to make disturbance. I was in the first lot as we slipped down the bank. After the first few scrambling steps, it grew suddintly dark—dark as if no light had ever shone on earth. High above our heads, through the thick-pressed leaves an' ugly tangled roots, could be seen a small blue strip of sky, with white stars shining in it. We tramped on, Ind'an file, stumbling an' falling among the slimy vines, clinging to the branches, an' now

an' agin climbing the slippery bank, to round some ugly swamp. Word was passed in whispers where a dangerous place occurred, an' long halts was called while S——, who led our march, explored the ground. Creepy things dropped from the boughs upon our hands, leeches swarmed up from the mud an' nipped our flesh suddintly, but no living beast we met all through the silent night. Now an' agin, there was low rustling of the underwood, an' hard breathings, an' flutter of big wings, an' faint rattling of stones. A fair show of ghosts appeared to one or other of us, but a Greaser ghost weren't likely to scare one of our Rangers; no man's afeared of a *yeller* ghost—'tain't nat'ral. A long, black, ugly march that were; an' I tell you, boys, I'd rather have stormed the lake barricades, though they'd been held by ten thousand Costa Ricans.

"At last the banks smoothed gradually down, an' the word was passed to close in. Two or three minutes more, an' we came out suddintly into the starlight, an' one after another all climbed the southern bank. Silently we marched along the dusty path, winding among the huts, in which every soul was sleeping, until the middle street was reached. Then we closed our ranks in the shadow of the houses. Straight in front was the first barricade, with two sentinels before it, an' one atop. We charged with a yell that nigh scared the Greasers out of their boots, such of 'em as had any, an' over we were in an instant—bursting down on the gunners, crushing the life out of the little Greasers with sheer weight of body, slicing down the peons with their own machetes. Thunder! not a soul would have been left alive had not the second barricade opened fire. Whoop, whoop! We dashed at it. The balls flew thick as 'pica-pica' in a dust-storm, but nought could stop our Westerny boys. A'most before the dandified Costa Rican officers had shook the sleep from their ugly heads, they was rolling over in the dust, an' our boots trampled their yellow faces as we charged the last barricade. Ay, there the fight was! The greediest among us had his fill before that posi-

tion was taken. But we was bound to have it. With the loss of half our men, we broke through, dashed like a spark of fire down the crowded street, crossed the plaza all alive with armed men, an' down the lake road to Guadalupe Church. Whoop! That was a race! Right an' left, afront an' in rear, we slashed, an' shot, an' pounded! The air was blazing with fired thatch, an' torches, an' rifle-flashes; the airth was heaped with struggling bodies. One would ha' thought all the Ind'ans of the West was in the town, the war-whoops rang out so thick an' shrill. Pawnee, Comanche, Apache, Utah, Dacotah, an' Sioux, every murderous yell of the prairies was heerd there, hot an' savage. When Henningson caught the sound of our attack, he sallied out to meet us; an' we drove the Greasers, thirty to one as they was, right off the road into the forest. We whipped them indoors an' out, under the trees, an' on the sandy shore of the lake. Yes, that was a big fight, if ever this world saw one.

"So we relieved Henningson in Guadalupe Church, sir. As Frazer says, who will write the history of that war for us?"

"Walker was not much of a man to look at, was he?" asked Vansten, after a pause.

"No, sir," said Beasley; "Walker was just about the meanest little cuss ever you see. He was scarce five foot four in height, pale an' poor-looking, with sloping shoulders, thin legs, an' big feet.* His father was a banker at Dundee, in the old country; an' Walker, as some say, was born in Scotland. My! if that canny old tradesman had known what his son was coming to, I guess he'd have strangled him in his cradle, an' pleaded justifiable homicide. His eyes were the only point Walker had that was noticeable. Thunder! those were eyes as would scare a starved tiger at sundown. I've seen a big Texan, tall as a 'rubber-tree,'

* The Western Americans have small feet and hands as a rule; in the North and East, the contrary is the case. The author has frequently noticed that the most renowned hunters and desperadoes of the West show the smallest extremities; but he declines to found any theory upon this fact.

square an' broad, neither afeared of Heaven nor Ind'an, stammer an' tremble under the glance of those pale eyes, like a country girl caught kissing. If Walker had been as good a general as he was honest man an' brave soldier, we'd ha' held Nicaragua now."

"He was very strict in religion also, was he not?" I said.

"He was *so!*" answered Beasley. "Walker was the most piousest man ever I see; every thought in his heart, every action, was weighed according to his faith. Ay, sir, an' it'd seem strange to you to hear that the first lot of filibusters was mostly religious men. Among the fifty-five who landed at Rivas on the invitation of Chastellon, there was nigh as much praying as swearing to be heerd, an' the only singing allowed in camp was psalms an' such like. An' it was right so, for I say we was engaged in holy work —in the redemption of a people! We were missionaries of a new gospel for them poor Greasers, a gospel of freedom, an' manhood, an' prosperity. Think what this country was when the Conquistadores landed; what millions of happy Ind'ans was thronging it, what big cities stood in every part, what wealth, an' wisdom, an' bravery them Spanish devils found among the natives! Think of Managua with its sixty thousand inhabitants, the town of Diriangan four leagues square, the twelve large cities an' two thousand villages which stood around the lake! Then cast yer eye over Nicaragua as it is now, an' tell me, sir, if you dare, that Walker had no right to invade the land. Every day, every hour, the Greasers fall back deeper an' deeper into barbarism; for it's a race that's doomed, an' a blood that bears a curse, is the Spanish! Where's the wealth, an' the beauty, an' the wise bravery that the Conquistadores found? Nicaragua, the Great Cacique, presented D'Avila, as I've heerd, with nigh a million of dollars in free gift; barring foreigners' money, there ain't that sum in all the country now. The Ind'an women of this land were famed far an' near for their beauty: look at 'em now! Poor, stunted, hideous cusses they are, ground to the earth by centuries of devilish slavery. In twenty years, the

Spaniards shipped half a million of folk from Nicaragua to work in the mines of Panama: there aren't a quarter of a million, no, nor two hundred thousand, in the whole country now—brown, white, an' coloured. The land was cultivated like a rose: it's now a swamp an' a forest. Who will contend to us, who know the history of these lands, that the devils an' madmen who've ruled Central America for all these years have right to rob an' murder their countrymen at their own 'pronunciamiento,' while a foreigner may not for his life an' honour step in to aid the wretched peons?"

"But you will not deny," I said, "that many of Walker's officers committed unjustifiable acts towards the natives: his Secretary of Hacienda, for instance?"

"Let the dead rest, sir!" answered Frazer. "There's instances besides that of poor F——, who met a strange an' unheerd of fate last year. I don't deny such acts happened; but whose fault was it? Walker came into Nicaragua at the invitation of the country; his companions, as Beasley says, was God-fearing, sober men, who'd no thought except of honest fighting for honest wage. I tell you, sir, 'twas more difficult, *at first*, to get enlisted in the filibuster army at San Francisco than to be received in a Bible community. But when 'twas found as no promise was sacred, as intrigues was weaving everywhere against us, as the blood we'd spent was of no account, an' our big limbs an' rough ways was mocked by the dirty yeller creturs we'd fought for, then men's passions swelled up, an' any one was enlisted that chose to offer! So it was that bad characters came among us. I don't deny all as you can say, sir! But when I remember what we were, an' what were our wishes, an' the aims an' hopes of our general, I take oath as the name of 'filibuster' is the proudest title I ever care to carry!"

RAPIDS AND EARTHQUAKES.

GO slow—go slow! Easy with that paddle, Yank, darn yer! Screw yer eyes on to the Kingman, boys; watch him for yer lives' sake, an' when he skirls out like a red macaw on a guava-bush, dip yer tools, an' make her sing!"

The canoe glided along under the gentle stroke of our paddles. The Kingman squatted in the bows, with his eyes fixed on the dark water, and we watched his every movement with anxiety. Though all of us were used to canoeing and its dangers, and three at least had names of note on the water as in wood, yet the savage took command here as naturally as we on open shore; for who would venture to pit his work, spasmodic, unequal, and liable to error, against the infallible result of a machine which acts unconsciously, by laws it knows not of? Let the civilised man study the wild ways of the forest as he will, let him cultivate his senses to the uttermost, yet will the result bear no nearer comparison with the unconscious knowledge of the Indian than mental calculation with the result of Mr. Babbage's machine. The savage reasons not; he can give no explanation; he knows no law, and profits by no visible experience; yet an error is impossible to him. Watch the Kingman now! See his shining prominent eyes peering into the water, while the paddle in his master-hand singly holds the canoe in its oblique course. He is noting signs we know nought of, and watching for tokens we cannot understand; under-currents invisible to our practised eyes are revealed to him; one turn of the wrist avoids that deadly *snag*—we glide in safety past that black and deceitful shallow. The thunderous roar and bewildering shriek of the near rapid

cannot daunt him; the water quickens and quickens under his rapt gaze; all our lives depend on his skill and sagacity; but he watches and knows and reasons not at all. Gently at first, but more and more swiftly with each instant, we float along, until even the danger-tried men behind begin to mutter anxiously to one another. Yet none among us dreams of displacing the Indian from his post of command; if *he* cannot save us, *our* efforts will certainly count for nought.

But the roar of the water grows deafening; another bend of the river, and the shrieking waste will be in sight. Already great smooth waves and seething eddies tell of wild currents and obstructions beneath the surface, and the stream hurries us eagerly among roots and tree-trunks rolling and flashing, sucked underneath and suddenly shooting upwards. "Where is the channel?" shouts Frazer at length. "There is none, señor," returns the Kingman over his shoulder; "we must dare the 'wild water.'" And with a flash of his paddle, he turns the head of the canoe down-stream.

One blank glance at each other, a hasty look at the precipitous banks, and the three Americans settle themselves on the seats with their usual cool resolution. We paddle gently to keep balance, and in an incredibly short time the canoe swings round the reach, and the long rapid lies before us.

A falling avalanche of water!—tossing and roaring, racing, whirling round, beaten back, madly leaping and screaming, overhung with a flying scud of foam, and stretching far as eye can reach between tall shadowy cliffs, mantled in drooping foliage! Ah, to describe the rapids of a tropic river in the dry season, their voice that dizzies the bravest, their boiling agony of waves, would need a language of the tropics, the sombre, sonorous Nahual or the stately Toltec;* our cold tongues have no words

* The author does not wish to insinuate that he is intimately acquainted with those ancient tongues; but no man, in remarking the richness of their sound, and the extraordinary flexibility of their composition, can avoid a certain despair while comparing the rigidity of his own language.

or boldness to express the grandeurs of such a scene. What faces, too, what expressions, one may note in the descent—faces idiotic with fear and dizziness—faces furious with passion, as against a human foe—faces set and savage—faces that come again in dreams from time to time as long as life endures. But the very madness of the scene strings a brave man's nerve! It needs no witness or experience to convince the strongest swimmer that his art is useless here—that death must be simultaneous with accident; for the under-currents, the snags, the rocks sharp from constant chipping, tear a body to shreds in an instant, burying the fragments in holes, or spitting them upon sharp stakes, whence the sheer force of water washes them piecemeal. In the dread feeling of helplessness, in the bewilderment, in all, in fact, but duration, the shooting of a rapid realises the horror of a nightmare.

The Kingman paddled warily on, his fixed eyes so dilated with excitement that a white line encircled the pupils. Suddenly he uttered a yell that rang above the voice of the cataract, and tossed his paddle high into the air. We answered in a shrill whoop, and drove the paddles deep, until the boat seemed to fly. The Indian screamed again as he caught his paddle in its descent, and, striking the water flatly, dashed a flood of spray over us; and then I can recollect no more distinctly. My ears were deafened, my head turned round, my eyes were blinded with the spray and glitter of the eddies—a blurred dream of tossing water remains, of foaming cataracts driven back upon us, of rocks and weed-hung snags that towered above our flying course. But ever and anon rang out the Indian's scream, warning us of danger doubly imminent, and our hoarse yells answered the challenge. Now we pitched headlong down a smooth green cataract of water, and plunged through the foam below; now we brushed a dripping rock with barely an inch to spare; then dashed like a flash through a long pool, seamed and cut with furious surges. In and out among the boulders, our frail canoe whizzed on;

waves beat over the side; the thin shell quivered and throbbed; but dangers to appal the stoutest were unseen and undreaded in our mad career. Still the inspiriting yell of the Kingman cheered our dizzy courage, and his skilful bladé safely steered our course. So at length—panting, drenched with foam and sweat—we reached clear water beyond, and fell helpless in the bottom of the canoe.

"Ugh!" murmured the Missourian after a while, stretching himself comfortably in the water that half filled our little craft, "I wouldn't insist on a high price for that luxury, not if it were in my claim, and any friend wanted to enjoy it. It's a sort of pleasure as lasts, that of finding one's life still inside of one. I feel much as if I'd a been paying undesired attentions to a powerful young female as had a broomstick handy. Guess we'd best take a strong drink as'll mix comfortable in the stomach, boys!"

Resuming our paddles, we floated down-stream until the late afternoon, and then camped. Rifle in hand, each sallied out separately in search of supper. Sunset brought us back with a bag as follows: one pisoté, a fat racoon-like animal of interesting habits; the heads of two savalinos, small boars; two big parrots; the skin of a "boba," or chicken-snake, nine feet long; and an "iguana," or lizard, seven feet in length, and full of eggs. And so there was great cheer in camp that night. The iguana, bereft of her eggs, and the parrots were made into soup; the pisoté and boars' heads were roasted; and the iguana eggs were cooked in the ashes.

Sitting beside the fire after supper, conversation turned upon rapids, and many were the stories of accident and danger related by these companions in their curt, picturesque manner. At length the subject was changed by Vansten. "Ay," said he, "shooting a rapid is skeary work sometimes, when the water is low as to-day; but I'd take them all as they come, from the St. Lawrence to the Chagres, rather than once hear the awful whisper an' rustle

of an airthquake! That's a judgment o' these lovely lands more terrible than war, or beasts, or fever. I've heerd the sound so gentle as to seem a dying wind, an' I've heerd it roaring louder than heaven's thunder! I've known the heaving so soft as none but women could feel it, an' I've seen big bulls pitched headlong. A man may get used to other plagues, an' cease to fear them; but to that sick quiver no living thing can grow careless. The bravest will turn white at the first warning; old folks are more scared than the young."

"It's the scream of the people, so suddint an' magic-like, that frightens men most, I guess!" said Frazer. "Mind yer, there's no disease nor passion so contagious as fear, an' it ain't to judge a body fairly when real an' awful danger is around him, an' all folks in the diggings is shrieking in hysterics. I'd scorn no poor creetur who lost his senses in an airthquake—not in a bad one anyhow. The wonder to me is how any man could live through such a burst as Cosequina's in San Salvador!"

"When was that? I've heerd a yarn or two about it years back. Was you there?"

"No; but an uncle of mine was invalided from a ship as put into Fonseca, an' he was fixed at Playa Grande at the time. 'Twas in '35, I think—ay, the 21st of January, 1835, as fine a morning—so the old man used to tell—as ever was seen on airth. The Bay of Fonseca was smooth as silk; never a cloud in the sky. The lazy folks of Playa Grande and Nagascolo was lying smoking an' dozing in the hammocks beside their doors, an' not a soul had notion of ill from any side on that sunny morning, which was to be the last for a half of 'em. They lay in hammocks, an' smoked and dozed, like worthless cusses, as they are; an' most of 'em, no doubt, had full in sight the big mountain on t'other side the gulf. They'd nigh forgot to call it a volcano. Not for a thousand years, as the Ind'ans told, had smoke or mischief come from that hill; an' they'd ha' laughed any one silly as had talked of danger from Cosequina.

"At ten o'clock, the 21st of January, 1835, that mountain burst out agin, an' in a fury such as never yet was known in the upper world, no, nor ever will agin, as I believe, until the last day. Suddintly it burst—not muttering beforehand, nor smoking, nor warning the people with tremors, but crash! all on the moment, as if to remind men what evil power was yet left in nature to destroy them. At ten o'clock that day, the voice of the mountain was heerd after a thousand years' silence: in such a thunderous roar it was heerd, that bird an' beast fell dead with the sound alone, an' great cliffs pitched into the sea! Ay, this is no gas, boys; there's thousands an' thousands still alive to witness. For a while, the streets of Playa Grande an' of Nagascolo must have seemed like streets of the dead, for every soul in them locations was stunned. When my uncle recovered sense, the folks was lying in their hammocks or on the floor, motionless an' senseless as corpses. The sky was still bright an' blue, but on the mountain-side was a cloud like ink, which rolled downwards as a cap unto the foot. Nought afterwards seemed so horrible to the old man, he said, as the sudden heaping of that jet-black mound in place of the sunny green hill.

"But it didn't long offend any man's sight—over heaven and sea the cloud opened an' spread. Lightning an' thunders burst from the heart of the ocean, an' sheets of flame glared luridly upon the sides of Cosequina. The darkness spread over the land so quick, that at Leon, two hundred miles away, they were lighting the church candles within an hour after the outbreak. But candles, nor torches, nor houses aflame could not disperse that darkness. For three days, no soul in Leon saw another's face, nor ventured out but to the howling churches, to grovel there. Night dragged after night, but nary day shone over the land. A lighted torch could not be seen at arm's-length! The ashes fell softly an' silently, till buildings crashed down headlong with their weight. None gave help. Tigers were in the churches, an' lions entered house-doors in search of companionship an'

protection. Hundreds of folks committed suicide in their madness, an' hundreds more became simple for life. Men's faces were blistered by the hot winds; the paint fell from the statues; the crash of falling roofs, an' the faint light of burning houses, doubled the horror of darkness. Such a time as that was never seen on airth since the plague of Egypt, I guess!

"But of course the most awful work was round the Gulf of Fonseca. The water rose in waves twenty feet high, dashed over the Estero, an' swept off the towns of Playa Grande an' Nagascolo slick as a prairie-fire. Scarce a soul escaped for twenty miles about. The cattle crushed over the barrancas in search of water, an' was destroyed in herds of thousands at a time; for none could see, nor hear, nor breathe. Rivers was dried by the heat, an' choked with ashes; forests was burned up; the very grass was withered through the whole length an' breadth of Nicaragua, and it's *never sprung since. Sacaté*" (a broad flag-like blade) "alone escaped; an' this country, which was once the grazing-land of Central America, was ruined till etarnity for that business.

"The old man never tired of gasing about the 'time of death,' as they still call it. At Balize, a thousand miles away, the commandante called out the garrison, an' kept them under arms for twenty-four hours, thinking all the navies of the universe was at action in the offing. There 'twas too dark to see fifty yards oceanwards. An' the roar of Cosequina was heerd two thousand miles around, spreading fear an' perplexity. Four thousand miles in a radius the ashes fell; at San Francisco, in Californy, they lay two feet thick on the roof of the cathedral. Through the length of Nicaragua, San Salvador, an' Honduras, no man could hear another speak, though he shouted his loudest, an' that for two days.

"Ay, I guess no man could be thought lightly of if he got scared during that time—no, sir."

"And has Cosequina been quiet since?" I asked.

"Wal, it's behaved like a decent sort of powder-cask ever since. The fuse has been allurs burning an' spitting, but its never bursted up much; an' yer see, there's a big consumption of power in such a blow as that I've been telling of, an' I guess the old machine wants to recuperate a while. But, as I take it, there ain't one acre of these lands which can be called right down safe aginst wind an' weather, like old Massoorah. Those lake-shores, they say, have been still since the conquest, that is, they aren't had an airthquake above once a week on an average; but what's the warning of them shakings an' terrors in Granada, a month agone? Natur' don't mostly toss about this big airth just for sport an' idleness; there's a meaning, an' a reason, an' a secret in every movement she makes. Eighty airthquakes in twenty-four hours—there was all that on the 11th of January, 1865—aren't sent just to scare a pile o' Nicaraguan Greasers! Guess Natur' don't make much 'count of Greasers, no more than other big folks. Four corn-harvests a year, mind yer, an' every other crop according, is a big promise; sun an' rain just when you want them, looks etarnally like 'ile.' But there's one thing as we think needful that one can't discount in these lovely lands—the soil's as rich as Ind'an territory in Sonora; the climate no man could better, though he worked it by machine; but the airth itself—the rock, an' rivers, an' mountains—who'll hold them still for us little folks to sweat on?"

PROSPECTING.

BOYS!" cried Frazer, "here's the health of Mr. Boyle an' the memory of our philosophic camps on the Indio.—You carry luck with you, sir, I guess, for we've made a fair pile. As to that, I ain't surprised, for I allurs located Ind'an John's claim somewhere round these waters."

"Who was he?" I asked.

"There's not a many about here as would need to ask that question," returned Beasley; "but nary child as couldn't answer it. Ind'an John an' his claim is celebrated from the Gulf to Aspinwall, so as never king, nor saint, nor hero, could be run agin him through those parts. He lived down yonder by the lagoon, in a little cane-built hut hedged about with plantain-trees, an' clustered over with scarlet-flowering pepper vines. Now an' agin, five or six times in the year maybe, just as the old man's stores chanced to last, he'd come paddling down to Greytown with his fists full of dust, which he swopped for powder, an' blankets, an' other plunder. Half a pint or so, he'd barter at a time! No man knew where his claim lay. The old man drank like a whale in a herring-shoal, he did *so;* but tight or sober, that secret were never slipped. An' it cost him his life, as all of us had warned him it must. Maybe it's twelve months since, four Greasers from Segovia followed the old man up the river to his hut. He weren't skeary at first, for many an one had done the same before; but these four accursed skunks, they tortured the poor old Ind'an, ay, an' his daughter too, until they died. An' nary word o' the secret was drawn from them poor creturs, all

alone an' broken as they was! Poor things, poor things! Tortured to death in them green an' sunny woods at mid-day! Not one of us near to answer their cries nor to avenge them! There's no grant of Heaven I'd pray for more powerful than to meet them four devils in a lonely place—durn 'em!—Pass that bottle, Yank. Thinking of Ind'an John makes me mad."

"There's a many as believes the claim lay on this side," said Vansten, handing the flask across. "But I'm mostly inclined to locate it Frio way. The old 'possum didn't travel overland all by himself, I guess, not being great things at lion-taming. An' it's just impossible as he could run up an' down the coast so many times a year an' never man set eyes on him. He was seen often enough on the Rio San Juan, mind yer!"

"Wal!" said Frazer meditatively, "it ain't much use guessing. Ind'an John an' his daughter have passed under, an' no living soul has the legacy of their secret. For aught any one can say, that new claim just opened, as I hear, behind Castillo, was the very spot so many folks sought for; an' indeed, to tell the ugly truth, boys, these secret claims are a downright curse to any neighbourhood. I don't an' never could splice ends with them as blow off gas about gold-digging—saying it's plunder easy come an' easy gone, seeking the root of evil, an' other granny talk which han't no meaning. But I say as every prospect should be known an' open. Secret washings tempt men who would otherwise have lived quiet at home in the hole they was shaped for; soft-going raws an' delicate boys with romantic heads it is as get drawn that way to their ruin. For old diggers, mind yer, who know the risks an' difficulties of their business, don't mostly heed such stories. But let no man tell me as gold-seeking is an evil trade! I say the finds in Californy and Australy have put the world a century on, an' han't spent their steam yet, nor near. But let them dig as knows what they're undertaking—the risk, the hardship, an' the uncertainty—who can stand up straight under fever, an' fighting, an' disappointment? It ain't such as

suffer in their heads when folks talk of secret claims—no, sir. It's just them as ain't fitted to walk out o' sight of the hospital an' the parish church as get ruined in that madness.—Did I ever know a man who'd made his fortune in 'prospecting?'—No, sir; not to keep it—if I understand rightly what you mean. There's many a thousand—ay, ten thousand claims which have given fortunes to one man or another, but not to him who prospected them. Gold-*mining* is different; rich men will go into that business, an' poor men are shut out by want of capital. A good mine, such as there's scores, will pay as quick as one can open ground; but washing is risky, is more open to robbery, an' allurs draws round it a crush of rowdies, as double the danger an' difficulty of working. Rich men don't care to stand the worry an' anxiety of river-work—it ain't likely they should; mining's the business for them."

"Why, you see," said Vansten, "take gold-digging where you will—in Europe, in Borneo, in Australia, or on this continent—it isn't the folks of the country who put in for it. They find pretty soon that on the whole, one week with another, a man don't earn *as much as by fair wages at any handicraft.* In America an' Australia, I know that's the fact; an' I've heerd you say it's so in Borneo, Frazer. Digging is a good business for gamblers, because one may pouch a big stake from time to time; but a man is mostly starving while he plays. Look at those washings in Segovia, t'other side of Nicaragua! I once saw a peon trot into Chinandega with a belt so heavy he could scarce sit his mule, but there weren't many Greasers 'such durned fools as to go picking after his 'wash-dirt.' Several Frenchmen, from Chontales, crowded out o' the town, slick away for the mountains, thinking it was straight travel for Jacob Astor's dinner-table; but a month afterwards, they straggled back, worn out with fever, pretty nigh starved, an' carrying barely a quarter the plunder they might have earned at light wage in the town. Gold-washing, take the year round, don't yield a dollar a day in any country ever I heerd of."

"That's thunderin' true, also, what you was saying about secret claims," observed Beasley. "I mind one case well in which such a story caused the destruction of a family as had never before dreamed of gold-seeking. 'Twas out in Sonora. I was quite young at the time, scarce fit to look an Ind'an in the face but through a spyglass; but on that Comanché frontier one larns the whole duty of man right smart. I'd gone into Mexico on a venture of my father's. At a little village called Santa Catarina, the fever struck me down, an' the boys left me there in charge of a Yankee, who was trying a small tobacco-planting. A good fellow, he were; but his wife, poor thing, she was a right-down female angel. They were happy enough, living in a quiet way, an' contented with small potatoes, until a lot of boys from Santa Fé passed through the village, an' made a camp some three or four miles away. They was sick-full of a secret claim lying somewhere in that neighbourhood, which had already given fortunes to two or three diggers they'd met. Mostly the Greasers only laughed; but poor Spielman listened, an' listened, an' talked prospect with them, until his head turned yellow, an' all his dreams was double-gilt. First he neglected work, wandering over the hills all day, an' gasing with the diggers; then he bought a bar an' a pan, an' flopped about like the ghost of a murdered dustman; an' his wife was considerable uneasy, you may swear.

"The Ind'an moon came on while I was still at Santa Catarina, an' I didn't like to desert the poor woman then, for the Apachés were out in force. No man who hasn't crossed the Mexican frontier can believe what a time the wretched Greaser folks pass every year when the Ind'ans are on the trail. The Redskins go out, sir, in reg'lar armies, two to five thousand strong, an' they sweep the country like as a net. Every year, at the same moon, they cross the desert, an' harry the Greasers deeper and deeper towards Mexico. The Comanchés an' Pawnees are bold enough in our country, but the Navajos an' 'Pachés, an 'Raphahos of Anahwac, are like a swarm of poisonous locusts. No man's life

is safe ten yards from the gate of his "corral," for there's allurs young braves hanging round for the chance of a scalp, or a white woman or child. They say in the frontier that one in three of the Ind'an warriors is now pure white, or rather yeller, an' that one-half of the tribes has civilised blood in their veins; an' I believe it—I do.

"One day news came in that a big party was marching southwards through the valleys about ten miles away. We thought they wasn't likely to break the trail to harry such a one-horse concarn as Santa Catarina—war-parties strike for bigger plunder. But Spielman was out in that direction, an' they'd be sure to lift his scalp if they caught sight of him within a fair distance. The poor woman was dreadful bad. When I volunteered to go look for her husband, she put her arms round my neck, an' cried till she fainted like. When she was quiet agin, I took my rifle and tracked out.

"Not finding Spielman nor any other of the diggers, nor any Ind'an trails around, I thought all was right, an' crept home agin. About two miles from the village, a big broad track was crossed; all the hoof-prints was unshod, an' the whole was swept as if by a broom. I knew that sign well enough; long-tailed Apaché horses had passed by within the last three hours, and since I left the ranche. Creeping on as craftily as I knew how, an' feeling my scalp-lock from time to time, to see as it was in gentlemanly order—as a frontiersman's should be in Ind'an neighbourhood—I at last came in view of the village. 'Twas nothing but smoking cinders.

"In an hour or two's time I found all the people, who'd run into the woods an' cachéd there. Not a soul was missing but Spielman, his wife, and their two children. I couldn't rest till I'd visited their ranche, though 'twas dang'rous enough to go near the place. The folks tried to prevent me, but I would go. Poor Spielman was lying without his ha'r, among the ashes of the hut, having plainly rushed in after it was burned. Of his wife an'

children there was no sign: they was carried off to the desert, with many a hundred more most-like from other parts. Had the woman not waited for her husband, she might easy have escaped with the other villagers.

"The end of that story is kinder funny. We soon struck the trail of them who had done the deed. They seemed to be about fifty in number, most-like a scouting-party led by the son or brother of the war-chief. Some thirty of us started in pursuit, counting the Santa Fé diggers. The 'Pachés travelled gently enough, for they ain't over used to be followed by Greasers, an' I must own they don't seem muchly scared when that event do happen. In a bit of 'chapparal,' a shady thicket growing over a ruin, we found them at noon next day. There was no sentinel nor even horse-guard'——

"Great thunder!" interrupted Frazer, "we find no such chances on the Texan praira!"

"Guess Comanchés air better bred if they ain't better born," returned Beasley. "The Rangers give 'em early instruction in manners an' deportment.

"We formed a circle round the chapparal, an' lotted off a body of men to stampede the horses. That's the dooty yer Greaser likes, an' he does it right well, too. Then we sent a yeller-skin up a tree to look what the Ind'ans might be about.

"We took our stations silently. Inside the wood, not a sound could be heard save the stamping of the horses out on the savannah, an' the sleepy chuckle of the parrots. My place was under a big tree, alongside the trail by which the Ind'ans had entered the shade. Through glittering, sun-gilt leaves in my front I could see the long crimson shaft of a 'Paché lance fixed in the ground as a challenge. Scalps of all colours an' lengths hung down motionless along it, mixed with fresh leaves an' gaudy feathers. By the red hand on the top I knew that lance must belong to a big chief, a reg'lar 'hijo de Montesuma,' for you must know, boys, the 'Pachés claim to be of the royal race of Anahwac,

an' look down on other folk most beautiful dignified. There'll be a tall muss for that bit of timber, I thought, an I threw an eye over the fixings of my rifle. It was my first Ind'an fight.

"For two or three minutes there was a stillness that might a'most be felt; then came a crash an' a yell! That durned yeller cuss had fallen from the tree! Quick as a thought the 'Pachés whooped, then dashed along the trail. 'Tarnal thunder! it'd be hard to tell which of our parties was most scared. I stood like a fool, too startled to use my hands; for, mind you, a 'Paché Ind'an in war-paint, with his arms an' his feathers on, is a fearsome-looking object to the bravest man, much more to a boy in his teens. I stood just like a statoo. The first 'buck' that louped past came full upon me, an' his fierce eyes, surrounded by a broad scarlet ring, glared straight into mine. 'Uph!' he grunted, an' louped past like a brown b'ar pursued by a grisly. Another followed; his face was painted blue and red—'Uph!' an' on he went. Every durned mother's son among them Ind'ans grunted in my face as they dashed out, an' I was reg'lar charmed to the spot. Fifty of 'em, boys, by thunder! an' every one said 'Uph!' like a dry machine. Durnation! I thought that procession would never end; but at last shots began to ring outside, an' I bolted after the Ind'ans.

"As to fight, there were none! The Greasers ran like a broken covey of 'hens;' but they carried off a good sight of horses. I got away safe enough, with a lance-thrust through my thigh; an' we could count scalps pretty even with the 'Pachés. Four, I think it was, we brought away, an' our party didn't lose more. 'Twarn't the Greasers that took 'em, though."

"And what became of Mrs. Spielman and the children?" I asked.

"Guess they were carried to the 'Paché villages; an' there they are now, most likely, unless they're dead," answered the Ranger, coolly twisting up a plug. "The boy should be a 'brave' by this time, an' a chief too, I daresay, for white blood allurs gets to

the front, even among the Redskins. Some of us might meet him on the praira any time, yer know, an' I guess he'd have no sentimental objection to raising our scalps: it's the renegades an' the white captives grown up that make the Ind'ans so mischievous. They're a long sight worse than Redskins born."

SAN JUAN DEL NORTE.

FIVE minutes more, boys! Just five minutes, by thunder! D'yer see that line o' brown breakers ahead, sir? That's Greytown bar, where the sharks lie thick, as in a Yankee assize court, an' the water tosses and tumbles, this way an' that, like a caballada of 'moustangs.'"

"Is there much danger?" I asked, raising myself to look at those tumbling waves.

"Never man passed over the San Juan bar since this new harbour was thrown out, without most noteworthy danger," Frazer answered; "but our squaws needn't practise skirling yet, I guess, if my luck ain't changed. But it's just such weather as this that I'd choose for 'goin' under,' if 'twere within my liberty. Folks have different notions, yer see: some fancies they'd die easier in black weather, some in hot sun, some in the rains; but I'd choose a day like this, I would.—And now, boys, take your tongues in your teeth, and sit steady. Above all things, sir, mind yer paddle even. Once the canoe gets across them breakers, no power in this airth can save our carcasses from the sharks."

It was a beautiful day, indeed, but somehow my sympathy ran with those of Frazer's friends who preferred "black weather" for dying. It is very interesting and curious to note how men whose lives are constantly in peril take up such fancies about the time or manner of their death. I remember a brave old filibuster, who assured me with evident faith, that he could not possibly die, or if dead could not rest in his grave, unless fate took him at night, and very close on twelve o'clock. "No, sir," he said, 'I ain't skeary

by sunlight, not of man nor Ind'an, nary bit; an' I ain't skeery at night neither. But it's about the stroke o' twelve I'm bound to go under—that's my time! It may be on praira, or it may be in forest, or on the mountain side; by moonlight, or in black darkness, or in city streets. All that ain't bin let in to me. But the time 'll be midnight. You may bet your whole pile, an' all your friends' credit, on that 'ere." The man was firmly satisfied that a law of nature decreed the hour of twelve for his "goin' under." I subsequently found that for this superstition, as for most others that strong men admit, there was historical if not rational foundation. The man had once been in imminent and deadly danger just at midnight, danger from which he escaped as by a miracle, and the notion slowly grew upon him that this was his destined hour. I cannot tell whether chance justified his faith, but it gave me a curious sensation to hear this reckless fellow, who had never known fear, thus calmly and indifferently foretelling his destiny.

But I had no such confidence in my own presentiments, and I looked with greater interest on the scene around. The sky was pale and windy, flecked with driving balls of cloud. Round the horizon, they were piled thickly; but just above the water-line was a clean-swept belt of faintest blue, as accurately parallel to the ocean as if drawn with a compass—a certain sign of wind in those latitudes. Before our eyes lay the low, swampy coast of Mosquito, scarce seeming to rise above the waves. The vegetation was of that deep, dull green characteristic of the Atlantic coast on this part; but above its low line, very faint against the sky, hung the distant volcanoes of the Nicaraguan table-land. Below high water-mark were long belts of shining sand, which crossed hither and thither, and showed the steady growth of the San Juan bar. Right in our front stood three cocoa palms, which a kind nature seems to have planted on that lonely sand-spit to guide the returning sailor. Ragged and wind-blown as they are, bent by a thousand storms, and struck by many a monstrous wave, they still bear up, firmly rooted in the sand; the only land-mark

for miles on that bare coast. On them the Kingman guided our course towards the white houses of Greytown, which lay in the midst of that dark vegetation.

"How it closes up!" muttered Beasley. "I'll stake all my plunder, as we don't find two feet of water now on the bar, an there was all of three feet when we passed out six weeks ago. Now we're on it—now—now!" Safely we got across, under the skilful guidance of the Kingman, who laughed at such a trifling feat as this. The small canoe leaped up and down like a horse buck-jumping; but strong arms at the paddles kept her steadily before the wind, and although a great deal of water was shipped at bow and stern, we did not show one inch of broadside; and so in ten minutes, all danger was over, and the sharks, disappointed, swam slowly from our course, like great grey shadows gliding under water.

"What was the depth, Kingman?" asked Vansten.

"Barely two feet, señor," the Indian answered.

"Thunder!" said Frazer, meditatively, "to think as it's not yet twenty-five years since the English survey declared that this harbour would hold all the navies of the world, though winds and waves was playing at destiny outside! Forty feet they had then on the San Juan bar, an' now we ha'n't but two! Just see, sir, what a port this is! Did yer ever see a better in one hemisphere or other? And mind yer, there ain't another, good, bad, or middling, between Texas an' Maracaybo; not on this side."

"Surely," I said, "there is Gorgon Bay to the north, where Captain Pim places the Atlantic terminus of his projected railway; and Limon to the south, which the Costa Ricans are now opening?"

"Limon, I don't make any streaks on; it's just an inlet, like San Juan del Sur, open to half the winds that blow over the Atlantic; an' mor'n that, it's within the belt of calms. As to Gorgon Bay, I ha'n't seen it; but from what I hear, it's all as one could wish for a railway terminus, but no more to be put along-

side of Greytown than a pie-dish beside the Pacific! No, sir! If ever a canal is cut across this continent, here's the spot where it must come out; here, an' nowhere else! Once on a time, an' not so long ago neither, there was a natural waterway as ships could traverse, between this port an' the further end of Managua Lake. But the Spaniards spoiled the half of it, an' nature did the rest."

"How was that?" asked Vansten.

"I ain't much up in history, Yank, seein' there's neither drink, dust, nor dollar to be made out o' that there profession, so fur as I've prospected it; but folks talk of nothing else much in Greytown an' so one gets fairly posted up in transit matters without knowing it. When your Nelson came here, sir, in the *Hinchinbrook*, he gave them poor cusses of Spaniards such a scare, that they blocked the San Juan with rocks to keep him out; an' those rocks are in the river to this day, causing the rapids of Castillo and Toro. Before that time, ships used to sail straight away from Spain to Granada on the lake; not big ships maybe, but such as could ride the Atlantic in all weathers and all seasons. So the Greasers cut their throats there, an' didn't keep Nelson out after all! As to the passage between the lakes—the Panaloya, they call it—an airthquake dried that in 1835, raising the bed of the channel a good ten feet. It's all overgrown with trees now, and the cattle feed in the river-bed. That's another difficulty, yer see, for any canal scheme. An' I don't deny as it would be a big job to keep this harbour clear; we've tried a many plans since Vanderbilt first started the C. A. T. Company. But what I say and swear is, there's no other port but this on the Atlantic side for the terminus of a canal; an' if canal yer want—mind yer, I don't put my foot down to the notion at all—but *if* yer want it, yer must dredge out Greytown bar."

"That's so!" exclaimed Vansten and Beasley at once.

"There's a regular course of nature which works on this coast, sir, an' has been working just the same ever since the Conquistadores landed. I can't say whether the Pacific is gaining ground

upon the west, but the Atlantic is losing mighty fast upon this side. You may watch the working o' that idee wherever there's a stream flows into the ocean. Every rainy season, it washes down earth from the uplands; that earth slowly forms a bar; the bar, for a time, makes a port; higher an' higher it rises, as in Greytown at this minute, till the harbour is landlocked; then the stream floods an' frets till it breaks through the weakest part, and begins to make a bar afresh on t'other side. Then the old harbour becomes a lagoon, an' the trees grow all round it, an' it shallows and shallows, till the old harbour, which once was ocean, is all dry land. You may see the process where you will. Behind them houses lies the former harbour of San Juan del Norté, landlocked this hundred years. A pretty lagoon it is, an' there's good sport to be had there. In a hundred years, this harbour that we're now sailing on, which had forty feet of water on its bar only twenty-five years agone, will be an inland lagoon like that, unless it's kept open by continual dredging. It's the same at Blewfields. The advantage that Gorgon Bay has over these old harbours is that no stream runs into it; an' that there fact, which would be destruction to a canal, is just the best for a railway terminus. Thunder! it's an etarnally strange thing to me how little you English know or care about these transit matters! The French have 'bragged' you out of Suez; an' sure as there's scalp on Ind'an, we'll 'take the bank' upon you in this country, an' stop yer play. That's what we shall do, before you've got yer money staked."

"Fire the Transit!" cried Beasley: "we'll have our boots full o' that talk in two hours. Ain't this a pretty bay, sir, to be just a foundling hospital for sharks, an' *manetee*, an' needle-ducks, an' fever? It's all writ about the Transit in books an' newspapers; all the story of the Yankee bombardment, an' Captain Hollins's letter, an' the fights of the Greytown folk against Vanderbilt an' his golfired company. But what's not told in any book ever I see is the beauty of this land. We haven't much of hills down on

this coast—he'd not be liable to argument who said our country was as flat as a skating-floor; an' that man who didn't fancy the colour o' green would be muchly put out of taste on the San Juan. But to them as does like green above all tints under heaven, I'd say: Tell me if ever yer sot eyes on a sunnier spot than this! See the brightness of the water, an' the softness of these floating leaves that cover it! Hark to the rustle of the long reeds, an' the twitter o' the startled spurwings, an' the flapping rise of the big cranes! Look at the water-plants, blue, an' white, an' purple, that fringe the islands. Them big trees seem to droop their boughs like a shower of green lace over the houses of Greytown! That's the secret of tropical beauty: every living thing droops, seeking support from its nearest neighbour. Our northern trees stand up alone, throwing out their branches level, an' holding them straight by their own strength; but here, each leaf an' twig stoops downward, an' drops its soft foliage like a weeping willow. An' men here air the same—they want our northern energy to hold them upright. If they get it, boys, or when they get it, perhaps we'll see this here bay of Greytown just alive with ships, an' these shores bearing the town that's fated to be mistress of the world. Maybe so. But there'll be something lost, too, if that takes place; for, by thunder! one gets to love the pretty, idle, drooping ways of this thriftless country. They're sweeter than the ways of Lowell or Yankeedom, anyhow."

"I thought that you could see no virtue in a Greaser," I said.

"Wal, he don't keep an assorted stock o' such articles, that's a fact; or if he do, they're consumed privately in the family. You can't, as a rule, call him brave, nor honest, nor generous, nor hard-working; but the breed is dying out so slick, we may afford to let it rest for such little time as it may still hang about these lands. To him as has eyes an' can see—there ain't a crush of such in this world—it's a strange history as is now making between the Rio Grande and Aspinwall. I should admire, if 'twere possible—

which it's not—to shut up all these countries for a hundred years, to keep all white men out of 'em, an' leave 'em free to their own fancy. What would likely be seen at the end o' that time? What is the sign as one may read now wherever there's Greasers an' Ind'ans living together? I tell you, sir! The Greasers—the curly-haired folk who have a drop or two of Spanish blood in 'em—air killing each other, air dying out in vice an' crime, air falling off in that little intellect which has enabled 'em thus fur to hold the government of these countries against twenty times their number of free Ind'ans. Up to 1829, mind yer, the Ind'ans were serfs, ignorant of their own power, led like fools just where they wur wanted to go, an' stopping when told so to do. It travels slow, does the *peon* intellect, but most deadly sure. No white man could quite understand a people so silent an' wrong-headed as air the Ind'ans of Central America; but shortly you may say as the priests an' the rich men have played fast and loose with them in blind struggles with the Radical party; have turned them round an' about, until they air beginning to ask themselves some mighty ser'ous questions. An' there's more'n that. Within these forty years, they've fit so many battles, they've spilt such oceans of white blood in causes they don't understand nor value, an' more, which they must despise, that the secret of their own strength has been revealed to them. An' that's death to the Greasers! Look round! Who's president of Mexico at this minute? Juarez, a pure-blooded Ind'an. Who was dictator of Guatemala till his death last year? Rafael Carrera, a pure-blooded Ind'an. Who is the 'Tiger of Honduras?' Who is president of this republic? Pure Ind'ans all of 'em, an' backed by a hundred Ind'an generals an' ministers. An' does all that mean nothing, nor bear any warning? If you think it don't, go into the first hut you may find among the bananas an' big cacti, an' draw the secret thoughts out of them brown folk you'll find there. Ask them what they air thinking an' talking among themselves. Ay, an' if you dare, sir, whisper a question about the old idols an' the old cacique families. Ask who does it, an' why it is that the mouth

of 'La Bocca' * is sometimes filled with flowers of a morning, to the mighty scandal of the priests opposite. Ask where the Ind'ans go those days they strike work so early, an' glide off towards forest or mountain. Ask why some poor cusses among 'em, ragged as the poorest, air received with bows an' kisses. If you can get an explanation of these things, an' of other myster'ous signs as we can see who have our eyes open, I tell yer, sir, you'll suddintly find yerself in face of the strangest drama as this world has seen."

"But do you expect a rebellion of the Indians?" I asked.

"No, I don't, for there ain't need of it, an' the Ind'ans know that fact well; besides, none dare to provoke them. They know as well as we, that time an' Greaser madness are working for them a'most as fast as their *machetes* could kill. They see that twenty years more will bury all the curly-haired folk, an' they're content to wait. Leaving Costa Rica aside, where there ain't any tame Ind'ans to speak of, the proportion of the races in these republics is about twenty natives to one Greaser. In Mexico, they say, it's scarce more than four to one, but I believe it's the double of that. Now, the population of all these countries is at a stand-still. Why so? I tell you, sir. The *death-rate among the Greasers balances the increase among the Ind'ans.* That's a fact as is well known to both peoples, but it's whispered round with very different feelings. Keep emigrants out of this country, an' I'd not give thirty years of life to the last Greaser left smiling alone in Central America."

"And after his death?" I asked.

"Ah, after his death! Who can say what 'll happen then? But there's two facts as seem clear enough to me, though maybe they'll sound to you wild an' senseless as forest-cries at dawn.

* "La Bocca" is a celebrated idol which stands at the corner of a street in Granada, the capital of Nicaragua. It has often been proposed to bury it, or blow it up, in consequence of the fact mentioned above, but no one ventures to take any steps. Of late years, the scandal has notably increased.

First, I say that the descendants of the old caciques would step quietly into their forefathers' places, without war nor trouble; an' second, that in one hundred years, all memory of the white men would be thrown into a superstitious tradition. I hold it, sir, for a fact beyond dispute of experienced men who know the Ind'ans, their nature, an' impulses, that the Christian religion would drop from them like water off a stone as soon as the white men's influence was removed. They'd bring out the old idols within twelve months; they'd set them in the churches within ten years; an' they'd just call 'em Saint This or That, instead of Huitzipuitzli or Quetzalcoatl; an' in twenty years the old dances and ceremonies would be restored wherever they have been lost.—You look as if you had some doubts, sir. I make appeal to every man who knows the Ind'an character, Aztec, Toltec, Quiché, Nahual, Chorotegan, all except the Maya, to confirm my words. —Ain't it so, Frazer, to your mind?"

"It's so, hoss!" answered he sententiously.

"What would come after all these changes, no man may tell; perhaps another civilisation such as the Conquistadores found, an' such as they say still exists, in that Itzimaya the Guatemalan Ind'ans talk of; perhaps only a bastard copy of the Spanish government. It's a grand subject, sir, an' one as I could gas about until my hair fell off. An' if we don't take these countries, or don't colonise them, the change will most surely take place, mind yer!—But there's the wharf, sir, an' our journey's ended. Please God, we 'll have another travel together before we die, boys!"

And so pray I.

A SAVAGE BEAUTY.

IT was on one of the great Eastern rivers that I made the experience you are about to hear. There are reasons, which I must not disregard, for preserving this vagueness as to the locality. But I would assure the reader, with all seriousness, that my story is true, and its moral sound. As a rule, one expects anonymous adventures,—without date or address,—to be alike amusing, scandalous, and false,—but the two latter qualities my tale decidedly has not. Strictness of fact is its justification, for the moral contained therein can necessarily be useful only to a few.

Picture to yourself a solitary canoe lying moored in the mid-waters of a great tropic river. There are now houses and towns on the bank which, at the time I knew it, was but a verdant swamp, broken here or there by a tiny patch of rice-ground, a cluster of little huts, or the tall dwelling of a chief. On the evening of which I speak, ten years ago, not an European could have been found within a hundred miles of my canoe. The night fell suddenly down, dark and windy; the tide was at its highest, and only the extreme tips of the "nipas,"—that ugly sister in the graceful family of palms,—rose above the flood. My canoe was anchored above their fern-like crowns, and over it and under the stiff, awkward branches thrust themselves. The breeze moaned and whistled among them, rattling their harsh leaves together. There were as yet neither stars nor moon; the clouds seemed to hang almost on the dark surface of the water, which stretched, rippling and soughing, on either side, till its eddies were lost in

an abyss of vapour. Far off, above the invisible bank, a red light glowed through the mist, and the boatmen declared that it burned in the house of a great war-chief a mile away. There was nothing to see through the dull evening vapours, except that distant fire; nor to hear, except the rustling of the wind, the bending of the "nipa" boughs, and the eager but monotonous sucking of the tide.

My boatmen lighted their fire forward. Soon it began to blaze, under the fostering of a dozen hands already numbed with cold. The red sparks leapt from swirl to swirl of the river timidly, brightened, took courage, flamed up, and irradiated a wild expanse of troubled water. The boatmen clustered round their stone hearth as closely as the narrow sides of my canoe would suffer them. A brave and honest set they were as ever traveller loved, but most exceeding ugly. As they crouched before the fire forward, their picturesque costumes and misshapen features outlined against the blaze and ruddy smoke, I pleased myself, lying on my mattrass, with recalling the old German stories of gnomes and goblins, to which strange creatures my poor fellows were most curiously like. But I don't know that in all my wanderings I ever felt so utterly alone, so small a speck on the great breast of nature, as that night. I watched the wreathing swathes of mist stalking over the water to my very side. I listened to the gurgling of the tide, and its steady "lap" against the gunwale, and I thought of times and faces in pleasant Europe with a sort of despair.

Suddenly, my meditation was broken by a pealing "Ho—o!" from the mid-darkness. My boatswain answered the unseen challenger, and held a short conversation with him in the dialect of the interior; then, addressing me, thus announced visitors: "The brave chief from the next reach, my lord, desires to present his slavish worship." "Tell the brave chief of the next reach," I answered, "that his slave, and all his slave's ancestors in their coffins, rejoice at this happy meeting. And pass a candle aft, if

there's one left in the locker!" There was one left in the locker, which I stuck into a bottle and fixed to the gunwale. In another moment the sharp nose of a canoe shot out of the misty curtain into our red half-circle. I was used to these visits from savage chiefs, and felt little interest in the strangers. Their courtesy entailed a certain diminution of my precious stores, specially of spirits and tobacco, and an uncertain sacrifice of other valuables. Not that these naked friends of mine stole! But they had a horribly frank habit of asking point blank for aught that took their fancy, and it was not an easy, nor perhaps quite a safe thing, to disappoint them. Therefore, though prepared to give current value for the presents which this worthy chief was sure, under any circumstances, to send next day, I could easily have dispensed with his courteous visit over-night.

There were three persons, I saw, in the approaching canoe. Two paddled, and the third sat aft. I did not look particularly. My boatmen had hastily raised over me the thatch, called "kajong," which protects a traveller from the sun; this ceremony was no doubt proper under the circumstances, but it had the effect of limiting my view. The canoe grated alongside my larger craft, but the deep shadow cast by the "kajongs," hid from me the appearance of its occupants. I raised myself in the cross-legged position which the Eastern voyager so soon acquires, and prepared a neat oration. In another moment a tall, muscular old man emerged from the darkness, rested his hand lightly on the gunwale of my boat, and stepped in, with no more commotion than is caused by walking aboard a three-decker. "The brave chief of the next reach," observed my boatswain ceremoniously, and I greeted the worthy old man with a smile and a shake of the hand. He sat down at the farther side of the boat, silently, but in great and visible contentment. I prepared to assail him with certain statistical questions, such as, I assure you, these savages are neither perplexed to hear, nor unable to answer. "How many fighting men follow you?" I was about to ask, when

another hand was placed upon the gunwale—another figure came up suddenly from the dark river, and stepped with ease upon my rickety craft. "The wife of the brave chief who lives on the next reach," announced the boatswain, who sat crouched beneath the kajongs. I smiled and shook hands. The wife took a place beside her husband with a familiar confidence pleasant to see. "How many fighting——" I was interrupted again! My left hand rested on the gunwale, instinctively placed there when the "brave chief's wife" boarded me, to counteract any ugly lurch which her unskilfulness might cause. On this hand was suddenly placed another, belonging evidently to a person outside my boat. So small and slender were those fingers that thus clasped mine, so soft and dainty and delicate,—all the blood in my body tingled; for I thought, surely 'tis the hand of a mermaid!—a Lorely! But no! A third visitor rose from the darkness,—rose, resting its hand still on mine,—rose and stood upright before me, framed in the velvety blackness of the night. It was the figure of a young girl, sixteen years old at most, sparkling, shining, in the candle-light. She was simply clad in a short petticoat of woollen stuff, which did not quite reach the knee. Her arms and wrists were encircled with many bracelets of gold and shell, and ornaments of brass; it was a crime so to overload them, for their shape was worthy of Hebe. Round and round her slender waist a chain of small gold rattles was twisted, which tinkled faintly with each motion. Her graceful head had no covering, except such coils of fine black hair as three English women might with joy have shared among themselves. The hair was not parted, but drawn back from the forehead, and tied in a smooth knot, with a quantity of strongly-scented flowers; the ends fell in a shower behind, almost to her waist. This fashion, which civilised ladies are just adopting, is the common coiffure of the land I speak of. The girl's features were perfect, from low, round forehead to dimpled chin! And wholly European in character, save that no eyes of our zone could laugh with such velvet softness,

nor plead with humility so irresistible. For this young savage's face shone down upon me with dewy lips parted in a timid smile, and innocent, saucy eyes, that said, plainly as words: "Am I not pretty? You are a great lord, and almost more than man, but you cannot refuse me a place in your canoe!" And all the while she kept her little soft hand on mine, while I stared dimly upwards, marvelling at her loveliness.—"The daughter of the brave chief who lives on the next reach!" gravely announced my boatswain from under the kajongs.

"The daughter of the brave chief who lives on the next reach is welcome to her slave's resting-place!" I said, with an affectation of mighty indifference. But the attempt failed, I suspect, for my boatmen forward, who had, like all their race, a true Italian interest in the minutest *affaire de cœur*, laughed gently as they sat beside their fire, and stole a glance aft. But the little beauty was too profoundly conscious of her own value, personal and political, to care one straw for the impertinence of mere boatmen. She murmured a few words, in a voice sweet as the lips from which it issued, and received a merry answer from her father. Then she looked down at me with a joyous smile, and, putting her foot on the gunwale——Ah! but I cannot leave that foot undescribed. Would I were a poet, gifted with Theophile Gautier's skill to celebrate the divinity of form! His fervour I feel in recalling the vision of that fairy foot, but not a tone of that wondrous voice have I. What was it that enraptured me?—a foot!—a member common to all animals, and sufficiently despised.

I will give the measurement of it, as taken afterwards. The girl was of ordinary height, four feet ten or so; her foot lay easily in my hand,—that is, was something under seven inches long. When I closed my grasp on that daintiest of prizes, my second finger and thumb could meet within an inch round the instep, or, by an exercise of some little strength, could be made to touch. But what is measurement of lines and inches in a work of

supremest art? Colour and shape and exquisite life give the charm. The prettiest of English feet, white as milk, and veined with sapphire, is to the little dusky limb of an Eastern girl as an elaborate marble of Canova's to the small bronze gem I hold within my hand. That child's foot revealed to the acute beholder great facts in ethics, on which big books have been written, and big arguments expended. He saw there expressed the suppleness of her race, the grace and delicacy that shuns exertion, the activity which, with hare-like speed, distances our tortoise-pace; and he saw, besides, the hurried, nervous circulation, and the fragility of structure. But, indeed, that little foot, resting still on my gunwale, was a bronze of the best period roused to life. The skin was smooth and polished as metal, and the tone, save where its natural colour was subdued by a tinge of henna or turmeric, matched that of Corinthian brass. The ankle was worthy of the foot. Such graceful lines, "attaches" so prettily rounded, I never hope to see again in living flesh: instep arched as an Arab's, lean and smooth like his; toes, not crushed together, nor curled up, nor pressed out of all roundness by the habit of boots; neither spread abroad like a negro's, but each standing slightly apart, lithe, tremulous, dimpled as an infant's at each joint. The nails were carefully polished, and regular as those of a hand; a stain of henna gave to them the very tones of agate. Ah, such an exquisite foot!

She stepped on board, laughing merrily, and sat behind her father. The old folks talked of their barbarous politics,—how the neighbouring tribes were threatening to renounce their allegiance to a chief now aged. Insidious propositions were made me to abide awhile, for no visible object, at their village; but not even the charms of that lovely girl who sat, all silent and submissive, by the gunwale, could tempt me to permit my name and colour to be used as a political influence among these astute, yet simple savages. Whether the daughter had been brought aboard with hopes of swaying me, I do not know, but I am

inclined to think not. She was the only child at home, and the pet of this venerable chief. Besides, I doubt much whether even her parents knew or guessed what a treasure of beauty they possessed in her. That loveliness was not quite of the style most admired by these good folks. The points I have described to you are common to many, to almost all, of their women, except the features. Doubtless, had I asked the critical opinion of any dusky Don Juan round about touching the merits of this girl, he would have answered, with that superb air we see daily at the *cercle*,—"Not bad. Her mouth is too small, and never stained red with betel. Her teeth are white, which is a terrible blot, and reflects the gravest discredit on her parents. Her hair is long, and her feet are small, but Tragi's daughter has longer tresses and tinier hands, while her teeth are black as burnt cocoa-nut can make them, and no man ever yet saw her without a crimson stain like blood upon her chin; *mais pour ce qui s'appelle une dot, mon cher!—ah!*"

She did not speak ten words all night, but sat under the shadows of the kajongs, and shyly watched me; smiling from time to time with such girlish grace as made my very heart stir. Now and then she laughed at some unintelligible witticism of her brave old father; a sweet, happy laugh, that did one's ears good to hear. In fact, I fell in love that night, and I know that if we had not met again, I should have returned to civilised life a victim henceforth to Byronic melancholy; feeling a desperate conviction that the only being I could ever love dwelt some fifteen thousand miles off as the crow flies, in a palm-thatched house beside an unknown river.

But I met her again. My business on this river of her father's took me almost to its head waters, and in a month's time I began to drop down stream again. Will you bear with me, reader, while I vent my soul in telling the delights of a canoe-voyage through the watery highways of a tropic forest? Heaven grant that before many months I may again be floating on their deep bosom! Ah,

why can I not paint these scenes as vividly as they press upon my memory? I cannot, for often have I tried, and never with success. I would tell of the start at early dawn, while yet the night-mists are curling on the water,—while yet the monkeys call musically to each other in the forest-trees. I would describe the eager bustle of my boatmen getting ready for the day's labour. I would tell how, with a wild cheer, they dip their paddles in the chilly stream, and make the tiny craft to fly from its halting-place of over-night. Ay, I would have my companion sit by me in fancy, underneath the matted awning which obstructs the glare of early day, rifle across his knees, and glass laid ready to his hand. For they have keen eyes, these boatmen of mine, and long ere your dull sight discovers the creature they point out with such mute eagerness, it will have flitted through the trees and disappeared, leaving nought but a doubtful trail. Game is thick in these woods to him who has quick eyes and steady hand; but not one hoof or paw will he see who takes to the brilliant East the listless motions of Pall Mall. Hist! What does he whisper with such still excitement, that brown "serang" squatted on the bows? Steady behind! The eager paddlers cease their clanking stroke, hush the broad jest and extemporised song. They dip their paddles with such skill, that velvet sinking into oil would make a splash as loud. Without a sound we glide above the water, steadily as with a wish, onwards. The "serang's" outstretched hand guides our eyes to a black-shadowed reach, where the water sleeps and rots, overgrown with fleshy leaves and pallid, unwholesome flowers, taking no colour from the sun. What is there? Too well we know our trusty boatswain to fear false alarms from him. We strain our eyes; and at length, beneath the deepest shade, just where that dark-leaved shrub drops its pendulous boughs into the stream—beside the fallen trunk, all clothed in ferns and orchids and many-coloured fungi, that lies rotting in the eddy,—we think to trace a shadowy outline as of some monster crouched along the ground. Gently, silently, we

drop down. The quick-sighted monkeys have fled this spot, and far in the distance we can hear their clashing progress through the tree-tops. The very birds are still. Gradually, gradually, a fulvous coat defines itself against the oily-green leaves. There is on all nature a hush that may be felt. Round and eager eyes, widely-distended now, half in fear and half in threat, gleam iridescent in the dusky nook. We can see the flash of teeth between lips drawn back,—we can almost hear the "spitting," like an angry cat's, which welcomes us to this solitude. Now is the moment! Up rifle, both together! With a savage snarl he turns and shows all his spotted side. Now,—now! And the panther,—trots airily away with tail upraised, and contempt depicted on his features!

This is your exclamation, doubtless, but the cruel facts of memory should not be allowed to mingle with the bright picture of imagination. I have missed many easy shots in stern reality, but in my simplest dream I'd scorn to introduce a rifle not warranted to carry twenty miles, and true as death. But if you will have it so, we'll leave the panther in his wood, and pursue our voyage.

The day grows on to noontide! Ashore, every living thing has sought the shade, and rests therein; but we, gliding ever downwards with the stream, hug reedy banks, where great trees overhang and shelter us; and so press on. Flowers are over us, and under, and around; unnamed weeds, but the more beautiful in our sight for the world's ignorance of them. Lilies, blue and red and white, of every shape and every size, sleep on the surface of "back-waters," and warm, stagnant pools beside the river. Of such calm spots now and then we catch a glimpse through arch of tufted reeds, or under green-fringed bridge of fallen tree. No man "hath come since the making of the world" to see the beauty here. For beauty there is, in these little solitary ponds, more exquisite than human skill can imitate. Ah! but there are other denizens than the sweet flowers and the pretty "Hylæ,"

and the honest, loud-throated bull-frogs. Great snakes dwell here and twine themselves among the lily-roots. Colourless monsters they are, with scales mouldy as if from long solitude; but now and again appears among these hideous dwellers a brilliant, jewelled, golden creature, from the swift stream near by. He dashes round the pond in high impatience and disdain, raising his shiny head, seeking the outlet with wicked eyes that gleam like fire. Sometimes the horrid creatures of the pool, the sickly-looking snakes, and enormous worms—yet more ghastly than the others in their foul softness—grow jealous of the gemmed intruder, and set on him with hooked teeth and whip-like tails and deadly poison. Then, to one who stands by, a terrible sight is given. Now on the surface, now in the still depths below, the merciless fight goes on. The hunted reptile darts hither and thither, plunges headforemost down among the lily-roots, springs into the air, twists through his foes with exquisite activity. They, the foul crowd, in chase! They swim against one another, they bite and strike in their vexation or in payment of outstanding feuds. Though each enemy be three times his size, yet is this brilliant stranger, armed with a subtler venom, more than a match for any two of them; but numbers prevail, and unless he find in time the grass-grown entrance to the pool, he commonly falls a victim to the outraged ugliness of the indwellers. Yet in general one might stay long beside these still and flower-grown waters without discovering a trace of the monsters they contain. Pretty sights are those most common on their banks. In the dawn and at eventide a hundred curious, graceful creatures come here to slake their thirst. Chattering monkeys slide down a creeper, and, thus suspended in mid-air, drink from their small, hollow hands—glancing ever round, above, below, with eyes of quick suspicion, pausing each instant, chattering uninterruptedly to reassure themselves. Birds of every size and hue flutter on the shallows, and drink gratefully. Big herons and huge white cranes stalk round and chase the little bull-frogs in their

muddy nests. Squirrels—from the small beauty not bigger than a mouse, to that vast fellow with the crimson stripe along his sides,—hop about the banks, sucking the buds and roots of water-plants. Deer, too, sometimes visit this spot, when hunters or wild beasts have scared them away from their favourite stream. Butterflies hover over it; orchids trail their blossoms down almost to its surface. There is more beauty than horror here. I was wrong to put those snakes first in the description.

And then afternoon comes on, and evening. The alligators slide down in their oily manner from the sand-banks, as the declining sun begins to leave the river. And then, then, what wondrous effects of golden light succeed! How keen the blue shadows! How mysteriously dim each long vista of the trees! The sunshine seems almost to drip in liquid gold from twig to twig and leaf to leaf, as it breaks through some tiny gap in the over-arching foliage. Redder that light grows, and redder; darker the shadows; the air more full of life. A scream breaks the forest stillness,—of what tortured animal none can guess. Roused by that signal, birds of prey that fly by night wheel suddenly out from their retreats, and swing across the river. Night-hawks shoot into the air, turn over, and sweep down along the watery surface, noiseless as the moths they seek; save now and again a faint twitter shows their thanksgiving for a prey. Then, a little later, when the topmost boughs are blazing in red flames, and all below is dim and misty, the mosquitos sally forth, the bull-frogs wake and sound the key-note of their night-long chorus. Fireflies, by one and two, flit across the grass, vanishing and reappearing. Presently, as it grows darker, they come forth in swarms, and hover round some tree that has attractions for their kind. It is beautiful to watch the sudden flash of light from thousands of these little insects, illuming the darkness for an instant,—going out, and throbbing forth again. Oh, I could dilate by the hour on the glory of the tropics! There only does

one see the pride of life, and the true lust of the eyes. But my readers grow impatient!

It was perhaps a month after the visit to my canoe. I was descending the stream, and had reached a point some fifty miles above the dwelling of my savage beauty. The day was at its hottest, but for ten minutes we had been conscious of an unnatural noise, which swelled through the forest like the noise of men cheering, laughing, singing:—in fact, like the roar of a multitude. We were prepared for any event, when the canoe, suddenly shooting round a point, came in view of a very large native house, crammed with people, all evidently drunk. "This is a great feast, my lord," exclaimed my servant. It may have been. Most certainly it was the noisiest gathering I ever assisted at. "Keep to the other side of the river, and slip past, if possible," I ordered. But to escape was hopeless. The men of the festive party were, indeed, far too drunk to feel sure of their vision at the distance; but a troop of girls stood by the river side, laughing, comparing notes, overlooking their coiffure, and criticising their friends' costume, just as do civilised belles in like case; save that these simple children of the forest had no mirror but the limpid stream, nor any dress to speak of except flowers and beads. No hope of eluding those bright eyes! But unless some well-known warrior were summoned to their aid from the house, I had little fear the girls would dare to address a white man. "Spin along!" I cried, and we flew past.

But the attempt proved vain! A slender, silvery voice called aloud across the water by the name these savages had given me. Discovered, I had to submit, and unwillingly gave the word to pull ashore. The girls scattered as we drew in, some running away in real or affected panic, some laughing hysterically at a distance. But the greater number rushed together, and stood in a compact body, holding each other tight. "Who called me?" I asked gaily, approaching the phalanx. Direful confusion and dismay resulted. After somewhat of a struggle in the mid

recesses of the crowd, a slender girl was silently thrust out, while the others looked at me with speechless anguish. The victim thus abandoned held her hands before her face, and all her graceful frame, scarcely concealed by clothing, trembled, so that I could hear the rattling of her innumerable golden ornaments; but whether her emotion was of fear or mirth I could not tell. In either case the situation might well embarrass a shy man like me. Not knowing what to do with this slender child, and profoundly discomforted by a score of dilated eyes fixed on me from the one side, while on the other I could hear my boatmen laughing to themselves, I boldly seized her in my arms, and pulled apart her hands. It was the heroine of my fancy! She looked up at me with eyes brimful of terror,—whether genuine, or assumed as a likely weapon by the little flirt, I had no idea. Do not think that the white race has a monopoly of arts; there are few tricks in social optics which Hindoos, Malays, and niggers are not thoroughly alive to.

While considering what I should say or do, the damsel broke from me, and ran at topmost speed towards the house, screaming with laughter. At this example, all the young girls dismissed their terrified expression, and loudly joined the outburst. I stood—it is not to be denied—in some confusion, feeling, indeed, cut to the heart, as much by the indelicacy of this action as by the proof it gave that no favourable impression had been made on my adored one's fancy. This perturbation of mind was not relieved by the frankness of my serang, who observed, with the calmness befitting an undeniable statement of facts, "The girls make a fool of your lordship!" I turned to regain my canoe, and hurry from this scene, but a dozen potent chiefs, with their gold-fringed head-handkerchiefs all awry, their necklaces wrong side before, and their dress in an indescribable confusion, came to entreat my presence at the feast. To refuse was impossible. I followed them into the house.

All intelligent creatures drink, and most of them get drunk

from time to time. High reason, true morality, the best medical opinions, and the experience of every man, in vain combine to discourage the practice. Daily are we told that the custom is extinct, never to come to life again in civilised communities. Daily we read such assertions, and no man dreams of contradicting them, because every one knows the truth too well. People drank in all ages, to excess from time to time, and they will continue so to do till the Millennium.

But if any sight on this round earth could cause the British Parliament to pass Sir Wilfred Lawson's Bill, and could persuade the English people to accept it—that sight was before me when I entered the house. Of this we will say no more, in charity to my savage but generous hosts.

You will have observed the young lady's shocking rudeness to me at the water-side. Nothing creates in my mind a more abrupt revulsion than hoydenish conduct. If the Venus de Medici in flesh laughed aloud, or maliciously, or in the wrong place, I should flee from her. I cite the Medicean Venus, because, looking critically at that young person, I could believe her to be not too well bred. Fancy Milo's goddess mistaking her "monde!" It cost me a severe mental struggle to admit excuses for this very doubtful conduct of my Hebe. To laugh loud; to laugh loud and run away; to laugh loud and run away from *me*,—showed excessively bad taste. But I was overcome in meeting her at the threshold. Such soft penitence was expressed in her swimming eyes, such graceful *mutinerie* about her mouth! as though to say, "Please forgive me; if you won't, I know how to avenge myself!" I longed to clasp her in my arms again, and vowed that she should not escape so easily next time. I walked up the long verandah of the house, escorted by her father and numerous chiefs, as distinguished, I was told, as they were drunk, I saw. They set me in the place of honour, where the reek was strongest, and the sun most fearful. Half-a-dozen of the leading men held me upright with touching care, and I, so far as my limited supply of members

went, reciprocated the service. There were two brawny fellows who supported me under the arms. Both of them I held up by hand. There was another valorous warrior who insisted that a prop was needed for my back, and nearly pushed me down, face foremost, in his endeavour to sustain *himself*. Putting my legs apart, and leaning forward, I supported him also. "How long is this to last?" I asked the serang, who was treated in much similar manner by warriors of less note. "They're going to perform some tom-foolery," replied the Mussulman sullenly, for their idolatrous rites entailed upon his orthodox conscience an infinite amount of supererogatory prayer. Meanwhile, my tawny belle had taken a place opposite to mine, and there stood, watching me with great eyes.

I won't tell what the ceremony was. Drinking was its commencement, singing its mid-course, and getting drunk its logical conclusion. Among other absurdities, etiquette required that a large bowl of liquor should be placed on my head. I insisted that the vessel should be empty. The dispute grew respectfully hot; but it was at length terminated by the utter overthrow of bowl, liquid, and bearer, by a drunken chief in a red petticoat. The young lady had been much interested in this discussion, and did not hesitate to pronounce in strong language her opinion of those engaged. "What does she say?" I asked my serang, for she spoke in the familiarity of the country *patois*. He gave a slang translation of her words. The language, though not actionable, was by no means what one likes to hear from a "young person." Nevertheless, when I found time to look at her, and marked the perfect and artistic repose in which she leant against a pillar,—her moulded arms raised above her head, and one exquisitely-shaped ankle crossed upon the other,—I felt that almost any crime must be pardoned to such a creature. I stepped across, and, looking on her smooth and rounded shoulders, could not resist temptation. I put my arm round her neck, —*en tout honneur, s'il vous plait!* Picture, if you can, my horri-

fied surprise to find the pretty yellow colour of her skin "come off" on my white sleeve! "What the devil's this?" I asked of my serang. "Turmeric, my lord!" he answered promptly. That was a great blow!

I overcame the emotion by an effort. With the tenderest expression I looked down into her eyes, which smiled shyly back to mine. I started. Those beautiful lids, so thickly fringed with silk, were unmistakably stained. "What the devil's this?" I asked of my serang. "Burnt cocoa-nut, my lord," he calmly answered. Again I felt a shock!

It needed a certain moral courage longer to contend. Yet I kept my place. Suddenly the young girl broke from my arm, and pursued a stalwart slave, reeling down the house with a bundle of tobacco, and a basket of maize leaves. Him she overhauled, and from his load snatched a handful of either substance, wrapped the tobacco in a dry leaf with a swift motion, thrust one end of the cigarette thus made into a blazing hearth, and returned to me, leisurely puffing at her prize. This was the third blow!

Still I held fast to my illusion, and entered into conversation with the houri. She muttered a few frightened words in answer to my remarks, and stood with downcast eyes, the very image of innocence and propriety. On a sudden, a rush of warriors took place behind us, and one burly fellow, most notably excited with strong drink, clasped my companion round the waist, and dashed down the long verandah with her. "Is that her brother, or her lover?" I asked of my serang. "Probably neither, my lord!" he answered. I looked on this profanation with eyes indignant, and disgust expressed in my features. She laughed, the houri! At the extreme end of the house, another partner, drunk as the first, seized hold of her, passed his braceleted arm round her delicate waist, and "rushed" her up the verandah once more. She paused beside me, breathless, her eyes dancing with glee! There was not the slightest trace of shame on her countenance! And yet these ruffians, who had taken such a freedom on themselves,

were as nearly drunk as a man can be to stand upright. I was utterly overwhelmed. I hastened from the house, leapt aboard my canoe, and vanished down-stream. I did not expect to see my dusky Hebe any more, nor, at the moment, did I greatly wish to do so.

But a month after I found myself once more in her neighbourhood, having ascended the river again, aboard a native gun-boat. We had with us a fine, tall warrior, who gave himself out as son to the "brave chief" of whom I have spoken. On making inquiries, I found this fellow was half-brother to my dusky Hebe. Arrived at the nearest point to his father's house, I put myself in a canoe with him, and paddled up the stream; not wholly unconscious of a certain thrill at heart. We reached the spot, and landed. The old chief sallied out, with all his household, warriors, and slaves. It was somewhat touching to see that recognition of the long-lost heir, for the youth in our charge had been captured by pirates long since, and reduced to slavery. But I looked still for the fairy form, which, in spite of all, haunted my fancy. She came at length, bounding from the jungle: her long hair loosed, and streaming to the ground, her eyes afire with eagerness and excitement. She threw herself into her brother's stalwart arms, nestled to his bosom, and cried with girlish vehemence. And when at length the first emotion had subsided, she drew back a little, still encircled by a loving clasp, to view the stately fellow we had restored to her, and then threw herself again upon his breast, and—and—

"Kissed him, of course!" you exclaim, my hearer.

Not at all! Deliberately and thoughtfully she smelt him all over! It was too much. Thus was I disenchanted with "lovely savages."

It will not be necessary to point out the more obvious moral; but there is one which was lately explained to *me*,—myself, the hero of the story. I had told it to a lady, much as I have told it you, reader. When I had concluded she remarked, with some

emphasis :—" Let me give you a piece of advice, Mr. Peregrinus. In telling this tale again, give dates and localities frankly, for fear of misconstruction. And, further, I would recommend you not to cling overmuch to this life below, since, savage or civilised, the feminine nature shocks your taste. Perhaps among the real angels you may find a non-masculine creature, who powders not, nor brightens her eyes, nor talks slang, nor smokes, nor loves either waltzing or scent. With mere earthly women of this day your search would be hopeless ! "

This was the moral a lady gave me.

DOWN AMONG DEAD GODS.

NO undertaking within the ambition of a respectable man is more easy of accomplishment in these days than the Nile voyage. Every step of this journey can be accurately measured before leaving Pall Mall, time fixed, and expense calculated to the *piastre*. With Murray in portmanteau, and circular notes in his breast pocket, the traveller takes the Southampton or Dover train; in due time and course of things lands at Alexandria, reaches Cairo, embarks in his *dabeëh*, sails up the river, sails down, and comes home again. The gravest adventure he has met was a "spill" from donkey-back at Luxor, a *Khamsin* wind at Philoe, or a row with his guides in the great pyramid. Such is Nile travel as most men would give their true experience of it, whether princes or bagmen. And I would not in the least strive to undervalue the charm of the voyage even thus carried out; for I have seen—laugh if you will!—a saucy little terrier, wandering through that still forest of painted columns which is called the great Hall of Karnak, struck dumb with awe, and I have watched a frivolous mind change and strengthen day by day, looking up at the swarthy sky of Egypt blazing from the zenith to the yellow mountain-line. Far be it then from me to disparage the Nile voyage; but if you undertake it thus, reader, and perform all the usual feats, do not, in the name of all the gods at once, boast of having "done" Egypt on your return.

For those Nile travellers who write books, and tell stories of their experience, generally do but skim the surface of the land's interest. The cream it is they enjoy, I will admit, but there are

sights in Egypt more impressive than even temples and colossi, stirring deeper emotions than curiosity or admiration. Your *dragoman*, remember, will show nought that is not in his list, nor risk one inch of his lazy person out of the common track. He made a bargain on the customary terms, and he will perform his part in the customary manner; no work of supererogation, if you please, for Selim or Achmet, or whatever be his ruffianly name. In dread of such demands, he will carefully keep from your ears the merest whisper that might tempt towards the perilous desert, where lurk Bedouins, and sand-storms, and horrors of thirst. Your red book from Albemarle Street, too, though all-admirable of course, and a glory to our land, will not encourage you beyond the beaten route. Whether the authorities who compiled that work—fearing for their future peace, dreading the pallid ghosts of travellers hereafter to perish on the bleak sands—avoided mention of the less known, and more dangerous excursions which may be made; or whether the book was written without personal acquaintance with those spots of which I speak, it is not in my power to say. But most surely those who blindly follow Murray, though they may gather wondrous knowledge from its careful study, will miss very much of interest, and, with fair luck, yet more of adventure.

The Egyptians were unwilling always to reduce their narrow limits of cultivatable land, and therefore preferred to build their temples, to excavate their tombs, and to erect their statues, in the desert. Among savage and desolate places therefore, will the most curious remains be found; he who desires to make discoveries must explore the very spots which his *dragoman*, and all other persons conscious of moral responsibility, would earnestly advise him to avoid. Do not, however, hastily conclude that I am about to startle a *blasé* world with some such tale of marvels as that with which Bruce provoked our great grandfathers to scorn. I chanced to explore several corners of the desert, which are not generally included in the narrow plan of a *dragoman*. In my

diary I find mention of the "portico of Shinoun," which few Nile travellers look upon; of the temples of Dinam and Kortj, whereof the mere names are unknown, I find, to ordinary tourists. And among other such little-worn curiosities of the land which I visited, are the crocodile pits of Maäbdeh, my experience of which I propose to set before you.

Some while ago, in the days before Fortune held any hostages of mine—in the days when I was free to wander over every sea and continent—in the days that I look back on now with a half feeling of envy, and a half of wonder at myself—we lay off Manfaloot in a dreary, burning calm, my brother Arthur and myself, alone in a *dabeëh* with our *dragoman* and his ruffianly crew. The calm had already lasted three days. Of sucking oranges, of shooting pigeon matches, of smoking *hasheesh*—which had no other effect upon us than to make us ill!—we were both tired to death, and, lounging in our tiny cabin, we even longed for the approach of that *Khamsin* wind which had for days been threatening on the west horizon. "Hassan!" then said my brother to the *dragoman*, "if you don't find us something to do, we'll break into the Pasha's *hareem* over yonder, and kiss his best wife."

"He! he! he!" laughed Hassan.

"We'll teach your little son on deck to sing Doctor Watts's hymns!"

"Ho! ho! ho!" he laughed uncomfortably.

"We'll overhaul your accounts, by Jove!"

"Ha! ha!" muttered the *dragoman* thoughtfully; then after a pause of anxious consideration, "Sir," he said, "the caves of Maäbdeh are only a few miles away from this in the desert. You might ride as far as the mouth of them."

Maäbdeh seemed somehow a familiar word to me, but long I puzzled in vain over its sound. At length, memory responded to my call. When a very little boy in the schoolroom, it was the pleasure, or the duty—anyhow, it was the custom—of the dearest of governesses to read aloud works of travel in the hour

between tea and bed time. In a book, which, I am afraid, is now held to be old-fashioned, but which was a wondrous favourite with us children,—a book wherein the most exciting narrative is judiciously delayed from time to time, that Harry's frivolous comments may be fittingly rebuked, and Julia's strict orthodoxy properly manifested—in one of those well-meaning works which utterly perplex an intelligent child, and leave him in Cimmerian doubt as to the operations of Providence, while seeking honestly to explain its mysteries—in this book, I say, was recounted the disastrous experiences of a certain Mr. Leigh, M.P., and two friends, in these very pits of Maäbdeh fifty years ago. The work was called "Evenings at Home," or "Winter Evenings," I am not very sure of the title now. But I remember very well that we children never felt more utterly abroad than when listening to the recital of this adventure in the crocodile pits of Maäbdeh. There is a conversation between Julia, Harry, and their mamma —or some such persons—at the end thereof, the boldness and reach of which struck my childish sense with nothing less than awe.

"'Suppose,' says Harry,—something had been done at a critical moment, which no one even thought of.

"'Then,' declares mamma emphatically,—something would have happened which was not in the least to the point.

"'Yes,' Julia supports, 'and they *ought*'—to have acted in accordance with young lady-like philosophy in short.

"'And in that case,' mamma calmly puts it, 'Providence, my dears!'"

This boldness of forecasting, this reduction of all things and chances to a preconceived formula, did utterly bewilder me at six years old, as the dogmas of modern science disturb my mental rest at present. But it was a dear old book for all that, this "Winter Evenings;" the stories were well and simply told, and the moral lessons, necessary I suppose, though perhaps somewhat illogical, and somewhat ridiculous in themselves, were not put

forward offensively. As I have said, the study of it familiarised me in early life with the name of Maäbdeh, and the tragic legend which hung about the spot; and therefore, when the *dragoman* incautiously let slip that these caverns lay within a ride of our anchorage, I determined at once to explore them, Mr. Leigh's terrible experience notwithstanding.

To enter the caverns, however, was by no means in Hassan's mind, when he proposed a ride in their direction, and our good *dragoman*, after the fashion of his class, did all that lay within him to dissuade us. But I must do a reasonably honest man the justice to admit, that when he found us resolute, not to be swayed by fears or expostulations, he did his duty well. The first point, of course, was to procure guides, for Hassan himself had not made the journey. This object was accomplished with some difficulty, and two boys from Amabdi were bribed to meet us at dawn with their donkeys.

The moon had already set, and the dim Egyptian twilight wrapped the scene, as, at the appointed hour, we pulled noiselessly across the river, and landed on the sand. The air felt dense, and even at that time sultry; for the *Khamsin* was at hand, even now dimming the horizon. In front of us loomed the hills of granite, ground smooth by whirling sand and furious wind; behind, the swift Nile gurgled in its narrowing bed. Our guides were late, and we were compelled to wait their pleasure. Slowly the sky grew darker, as the reflected moonlight died from the horizon; the glimmering mountains vanished; even the white sand at our feet grew indistinct. Then the wild geese began their morning clamour, trumpeting as they sallied from their holes. A snowy ibis rustled past us, ghostly in the darkness. The "zic-zac" roused his mate with grating cry, and a desert fox, or jackal, slipped noiselessly through our midst, on his homeward way from water. It was just at sunrise the boys appeared, and glad indeed we were to see them; for, to stimulate our natural impatience, a species of the sand thistle had pene-

trated our shoes and trousers, so that we could scarcely move without dire laceration.

The route, when at length we got in motion, lay through vast fields of corn, such as usually border the Nile in Lower Egypt. It was in the month of April, very late for such travel, and the earth was already green. Breaking the level here and there, stood a tall patch of hemp or sugar-cane, the latter small and stunted in comparison with those great stems which are a boast of the farther East, but bright in colour, and graceful in the droop of their grass-like leaves. Then, as the sun leapt up above the mountains with that eager triumph characteristic of his rising in this land, we skirted the mud huts of a village, passing unnoticed through their glimmering plantations of date-palm. And then we emerged again into the broad corn-fields, warm in the white light of morning. Hoopoos fluttered from bush to bush as we approached, and lighting, waggishly shook their tawny crests at us. Glittering swallows, green as emeralds, the *tayr allahs*—holy birds of Arab superstition, circled swiftly over our heads. Pigeons—in such flocks they seemed like clouds descending—passed us by on their way to water, making a rustle in mid-air as of forest leaves in a summer wind. Gradually the mountains regained their dusty, yellow tone; the shadows purpled, the strange, sharp outlines of the rocks stood out line by line in marvellous distinctness. Without encountering any man, we trotted across the fertile land, until, after two hours' journeying, the foot of those granite cliffs was reached.

After following their edge for a few hundred yards, the guides led us into a broad, sandy gorge, which seemed—so smooth and clean it was—to have been a carriage road for the ancient kings. No words can give the untravelled reader an idea of this valley of desolation. Not a tree, not a blade of grass nor mossy tuft, concealed the yellow, wind-worn stone. No stain appeared upon it, no little heap of rotting leaves filled any corner. Every crack and cranny was swept clean. The blue shadows fell keen and

cutting upon the sand, as though shaped of material hard as the rock forecast. Overhead, the hanging crags burnt and glittered and dazzled against the sky, reflecting the angry sun-rays back and forth across the valley. A sickly yellow glare beat up through our closed eye-lids, shot with flashes of brilliant colour; our mouths smarted and bled with heat and burning of the sand, which rose in clouds beneath our feet.

Deeper and deeper we penetrated the blinding hills, now traversing a table-land radiant with heat as a furnace scarce extinguished, now clambering up a gorge, from the top of which the green Nile valley could be seen, and the opposite horizon of mountains. Not a sound had we heard for hours, except the shuffling step of our donkeys, and an occasional mutter from the Arab boys, who tramped with muffled heads beside us. So brilliant was the light, so complete the stillness, so monotonous the tints around, that our procession seemed shadowy and ghost-like as it moved. This effect is always to be observed in Egypt, more or less, but I was never so struck and impressed by it as on this occasion. There was no rounding of objects, owing to the keen abruptness of the shadows. A living man seemed to be but a painted image of himself, the thickness of a sheet of paper.

At length we reached the top of a ridge, where the sand was thickly mingled with a glittering dust, which made it sparkle quite prismatically. In a few moments more we emerged into a basin surrounded by sharp rocks. In the centre thereof appeared an oblong hole. Our destination was reached.

Dismounting and tying up our donkeys, we examined the entrance, which was a mere horizontal cutting in the rock, like the mouth of a well. It was about ten or twelve feet deep, and from above we could discern a low, black opening, which led to the interior caverns. One of the Arabs expressed his willingness to enter; the other prudently desired to remain above. Thus, then, we arranged the party: an Arab first, then Arthur,

then Hassan, and lastly myself. Without accident we let ourselves drop down the hole, and at the bottom made a toilette suitable for subterranean travel. Then, one by one, we slipped under a massive block of stone, which seems each moment about to fall and shut out inquisitive travellers for ever; perhaps also to shut a few of them in.

"And now," said Arthur, sitting leisurely down in the twilit passage, "what are we going to find here? Is it a treasure hidden by the late Captain Kidd, or is it coal, or is it—is it 'ile?'" Arthur had but just returned from an American trip.

"Yes, sir," said Hassan grinning, "it's a sort of 'ile,' sir."

"What? Why, I smell it already! Petroleum 'ile' it is! Of the finest description!"

"No, sir, not petroleum 'ile,'—crocod-ile!" And the *dragoman* leaned against the rock to laugh.

We lighted wax candles, brought for the purpose, and stooping down, advanced some eight or ten feet into the cavern, at which distance from the mouth a sudden lowering of the roof thrust us down on hands and knees. Still the height of the passage diminished, and at about forty yards from the entrance, we were compelled to lie down full length, and pull ourselves along by hands and elbows. Just at the moment when I began to feel somewhat alarmed, the roof heightened, and we emerged into a chamber hung with fine stalactites. Its ceiling was lofty, but its breadth scarcely more than thirty feet; the flooring consisted of fine sand.

Entering a passage on the further side, we progressed for some yards in a comfortable attitude. Then again we were forced to our knees, and, some time afterwards, to the snake-like manner of march. Every yard the heat grew more stifling, and that sickly smell of bats, which every Nile traveller must recall so well, mingled in foul union with the odour of confined air, and the bituminous exhalations of the mummies within. How far this passage may have extended, or how long we were thus coffined

in a hole not two feet square, I cannot guess; quite long enough to make every one of us repent of his temerity. This part of the cavern may have been three hundred yards long, or only a hundred, I cannot say; certainly not more than the larger estimate, nor less than the smaller. The fact is, that a bachelor of intelligence and virtue is not so frequently in the habit of "playing at serpents" that he can calculate his probable speed in an enforced imitation of the reptile's movements. The atmosphere, as we penetrated deeper, became something horrible beyond description. I have had experience of heat in both Tropics, and both hemispheres; I have sweltered in the desert, and cruised the Red Sea in the month of May, but never did I suffer such fearful oppression as in those foul caverns.

At length we again emerged from the narrow passage, and though still unable to stand upright, could at least stretch arms and legs, cramped by an hour, by a day, by ten minutes of such travel. The chamber in which we found ourselves was a long, low cavern, blocked almost to its roof with vast masses of stone. Climbing cautiously from rock to rock—for the interstices seemed bottomless, or at least were black enough to justify that fear—we were encountered by a real cloud of bats, which darted straight at us, beat our faces with their wings, and clawed themselves tight into our hair and whiskers. Never, I conceive, were men frightened more utterly than we, when this rustling tornado enveloped us: Arthur dashed his arms about like a polypus in a squall, and no doubt effected great execution among the foe.

Hassan sat steadfastly down upon a stone and shouted—shouted to all his gods for aid. I pulled my hair out by the roots, heedless of sharp little teeth which vigorously opposed the sacrifice. But our foes vanished as suddenly as they had appeared; like a leathery whirlwind they hurtled through the caverns, startling our Arab at the entrance to such a degree, that he recalled a prayer;—which was a great feat and a glorious for the Fellah bats upon the Nile.

After this interruption we resumed our progress, and clambered over the rocks. On the opposite side was a doorway, squared by human hands. It was raised some feet above the level of the chamber, and, as we judged from certain holes in the lintel, had once been fitted with a door. This was the first signs of handiwork we had found.

After passing through this opening the peculiar mummy smell became much stronger, and the heat, if possible, increased. We advanced a few yards in a crouching posture, then betook ourselves to hands and knees, and finally to the snake-like motion again. Our nerves were by this time so excited, that the distance seemed endless. If bats could exist in that atmosphere, and at so great a distance from the outer air, why not other creatures?—why not snakes? In no part of the subterranean passage could one of us have got before the other; and supposing I, the last, had been suddenly seized with sickness, and unable to move, the others in front must have—must have—why, in sooth I dare not guess at this distance of time what would have become of them! And these thoughts were in the mind of each of us; more especially, I think, in mine, because the others' fate thus depended on me. I do not mean to say that there is extraordinary danger in exploring these pits, but most certainly there is most fearful risk, if the distinction be understood. There was no probability of meeting a snake, but, had one appeared, the foremost man of us at least was doomed, must have fallen a victim without the chance of a struggle, must have been utterly helpless and unresisting. Similarly, it was not probable that I, being strong and reasonably healthy, should be taken with a fit; but if such an event *had* happened, the others might have perished one by one, unable alike to remove my body or to pass over it.

After a while, however, we found ourselves able to get upon hands and knees, and, in a few moments more, I made a discovery. Feeling something clammy and soft beneath my hand, I

sprang backwards with such haste as nearly to smash my skull against the roof, and thrust the candle forward to reconnoitre. Then I saw that the floor over which we crept was of kneaded human limbs, and the substance upon which my hand had rested was the long, auburn hair of a woman. By my knee lay the tiny leg of a child, torn off at the thigh. Heads and limbs—some still partly wrapped in the cere-cloth—literally composed that awful pavement, mingled with strips of mummy cloth, fragments of sarcophagi, tangles, whole scalps of woman's hair. Here, the gilded face of some priest or noble shone out from the dusky mass under the light of our candles; there, propped against the wall, stood the naked body of a woman, with the chest hideously smashed in. Such a fearful scene of sacrilege and violence was it, that even Hassan, little used to reverence dead infidels, indignantly disclaimed, in the name of his countrymen, any share in its perpetration. "It's English travellers, sir, who did it!" he said. And I believe he spoke the truth. Yet can it be true? I am telling no fictitious story, nor exercising my fancy in the description of a scene revolting to the heart. Some one, Mussulman or Christian, has treated these poor heathen corpses at Maäbdeh in a manner shameful, not to his creed alone and to his nation, but to manhood's self. The very savages of Labuan, it is said, spare the children's bodies when they seek materials for their ghastly and mysterious orgies; but neither age, nor womanhood, nor the holiness of infancy, have those ghouls reverenced who held their sabbath at Maäbdeh. I am no fanatic, for sentiment and rough living have destroyed in me much of that superstition which enwraps the dead. Had there been a purpose to be served in hideously dismembering these poor bodies, I would not needlessly have raised the voice of indignation; but there is none, and never can have been! Good faith, are we still so cruelly orthodox in England, that the bodies of men, holier it may be than ourselves, shall not be respected because their souls are dogmatised to hell? Who did this thing? Surely

the man who had the hideous courage to hack off women's limbs, to toss them to and fro, to tear out their hair, and beat in their breasts, cannot lack that far inferior boldness which would own the act when challenged. It was not a task, a penance, which one would wantonly perform; a sense of duty could alone strengthen the bravest to go through with it. Doubtless the gentleman had a motive. Let us hear, and, if possible, respect, though it may fail to convince us; or, in Heaven's name, for the credit of our country, its manhood, and that creed of which it makes profession, let us declare aloud and boldly that a madman, ay, a lycanthropist—escaped from custody, and wrought this deed in the wildest fury of dementia. Let us declare that, and take oath upon it if necessary, rather than admit that one of us was capable of so dastardly, so damnable a sacrilege on the dead!

From this scene of horrors, we proceeded without further interruption to the tombs of the sacred crocodiles. It was a curious sight enough, when at length we reached the end. The animals lie upon the cavern-floor, head to tail, tail to head, as closely as they could be packed, one above another, with palm-leaves strewn between each layer. How far the range of tombs extends into the mountain none can say; two chambers only are now open for examination. It did not appear to me that the caverns were in any sense human handiwork, but it seems most probable that the traveller now enters by the back way. It is obviously impossible that the crocodiles could have been brought to their burial place by the way we came, because they are, many of them, so gigantic, that no exertion can force back their shoulders through the passage that we discovered. It seems likely then that another entrance exists, or once existed, of more convenient character, and that the approach which is now the only one known was either unformed or unused at the date when the sacred animals were gradually stored here. The manner of their arrangement is simple enough. Row was piled on row,

until the whole grotto was full from floor to roof, after which the sextons retired to the next chamber, and stored that also with dead deities in a similar manner. Thus we were not able to make even a guess at the length or extent of the sepulchre, nor can any one ever do so until the caverns are cleared. One of the most noticeable facts connected with these interments is the abundance of small crocodiles, some but just hatched, many yet in the egg, which, rolled in a strip of mummy cloth, and tied together in bundles of twenty, fill the interstices. They are literally in thousands. From a very rough and imperfect calculation, we estimated that five hundred of these baby-gods were packed around each full-grown reptile; and, in the two chambers to which one may gain access by crawling *through* the mummies, I should judge there could not be less than half a million of them; perhaps—for the end of the second grotto is not to be seen—there may be ten times that number. As I have already observed, no means whatever exist for obtaining an idea how far these caverns stretch, each filled up, like a barrel of herrings, to the top. What amazing mortality then must that have been among the eggs and young, which could supply so vast a quantity of mummies! Is it not reasonable to suspect that the old Egyptians, who paid such fearful reverence to their scaly deities when toothed and tailed, clawed and armoured, never lost the pious opportunity of prematurely restoring their younger members to Olympus? Here is an Egyptian joke! *Pas possible*, you say. On the contrary, I know no race more addicted to broad fun than this.

A wonderful discovery, is it not? but no new idea, to the observant wanderer on the Nile. The world, in its happy days of ignorance, was apt to think that the Egyptian character, not witty itself, but unwillingly lent itself even as a source of wit to others; a view which the fearsome books of its interpreters have fully corroborated. But there are various kinds of national humour. There is the French, the perfect type, which breaks a bone or

pats a cheek; the English, which mostly runs on from coarse words into coarser actions; the American, which grasps all creation as its armoury, and draws supplies freely from the antediluvian world. These are divers types, and the Egyptian differs again. It was a strong, lasting, venerable sort of wit, and found its fitting vehicle in bricks and stone. You do not suppose, you cannot suppose, my dear sir, that the architect of the Pyramids, and the sculptor of the Sphynx, did not know they were perpetrating a jest that would outlive the ages: a gem of practical humour to survive alike the comic history of Berosus and the double acrostic of Belgravia? Why else did the one select those particular measurements which have overwhelmed Mr. Piazzi Smith? or suddenly change his angle of elevation, and thus dumbfounder a Transatlantic namesake of that professor? What means the Sphynx's granite mouth, which, in the still moonlight of the desert, bears down upon the world with such dire and weirdly humour, as the shadows steal along those mountainous features? Talk to me of beauty—pooh! There is that throughout the length of Egypt which is more serviceable to man—there is fun! Study the portraits of Cleopatra and Cesarion upon the fane of Dendera!

I have seen dull souls stand aghast before these effigies, unable to believe their senses, but not daring to conceive the secret. Do you not see? The Egyptian artist thus avenged the outrage to his country's decency; thus, in two delightful sculptures, did he mock the licence of the Greek, and the brute force of mighty Cæsar. Are they not supremely droll also, those sculptures in the twilight of Esné's temple? I have laughed to tears in admiration of them. The very gods themselves were not secure from the untameable verve of these funny fellows. The Pantheon of Egypt was the earliest of pantomimes, and the most original. Whence do you think that second-rate man drew his ideas who first designed the burlesque masks of Drury Lane? Surely from Esné; and how far he falls beneath the model! It was a notion

brilliant enough to set a bird's head, an elephant's, or a crocodile's upon the shoulders of a man, but the genius of Egypt was not content with such low comedy. Observe the postures of his gods! remark the action of their hands! examine at your ease the objects which they hold so gingerly, and consider for an instant the domestic furniture on which they sit! Have we not joking of the highest class in every fragment of Egyptian sculpture? There are the hieroglyphs also, so funny that even Herodotus could see their humour; the papyri, Joe Millers in manuscript. Consider this new interpretation of Egyptian mysteries at your leisure, and you will find much comfort for the soul therein. And when you think you have got the theory complete, set it down in octavo, and dedicate it to the late Mr. Simonides. After which, send your work to the Athenæum for review, publicly forgive your enemies, and make your will.

To return to the crocodiles. After examining all of the cavern yet accessible, and securing a few specimens of its contents, we hastened from the spot, for a more ghastly spectacle was never seen than these grottos lit up by our candles. The mingling of human limbs with reptile mummies seemed very horrible. There was in one corner a foot and a leg, black and cramped as with the death pang, which protruded from the mass, erect, weirdly. It fascinated me—I approached and grasped the limb, wishing to cover it decently—I pulled, and all that dim and kneaded heap of members seemed to seethe and work as though rising to direful life again. I abandoned the attempt with something of a thrill, and shortly after we retired, dragging our trophies by ropes and waistbelts. Through the narrow and noisome passages we crept again wearily, our nerves, or mine at least, not a little unstrung by the heat, the foul air, and the mystery of the caverns. We rested for a few moments in the second chamber, and then made our way to the free outer air.

I will not pause to tell how bright the daylight seemed, or

how welcome was even that burning atmosphere, cool when compared with the subterranean furnace. Neither will I venture to describe how the sky gradually changed its tone to a dull yellow, while the horizon assumed a tinge of fiery purple, as we proceeded homewards; nor drain my force of superlatives in telling of that storm of sand and living fire which the Arabs call a *Khamsin*; the which overtook us in the mountains, and pursued us all the way to Cairo. Nor do I care to dwell upon a very common-place quarrel with the Sheikh of Maäbdeh, who, for some inscrutable reason, insisted upon hanging our donkey boys right away; but I have often chuckled since, remembering how he winced when I put a revolver to his forehead. These things were not in my design when I commenced this paper.

I simply desired to show that there are interesting sights upon the Nile which visitors do not generally see. One remark it is fitting I should make, in case any traveller should be tempted to follow in my steps. There is very little danger, if reasonable caution be used, in visiting the crocodile caves of Maäbdeh. Never mind what your *dragoman* says; the main peril lies with the party itself. Put your weakest man in front and the stoutest behind; one might draw a body out by the heels, but it would be impossible to *push* a child along those passages. Also, beware of your lights! One spark falling on that mass of dry tinder might kindle such a blaze as would overwhelm your party in a second. Here is the most serious peril: beware of it.

One word as to the pits themselves. No historian, so far as I am aware, makes any allusion to them; their date is entirely unknown. It may be that the sacred crocodiles, from earliest times, were buried here, for the entire mountain is, perhaps, hollow. That the caves now open are of nature's mining, I am convinced, but that fact does not prove that great works may not be found beyond. As I have said, one enters now by a back

way, through the length of which there is no trace of human handiwork, excepting in a doorway close upon the mummies' resting place. It is possible that antiquities of the highest interest might be found, were the true entrance discovered, but if that event should ever take place, it will, I suppose, as in other cases, be due to accident. Of those human mummies now mingled with the reptiles, one must conclude them to be those of attendants on the sacred crocodiles. They seem to have been second-class people, or if their mouldering fingers and black arms were adorned with burial ornaments, sacrilegious hands have long since stripped them. But, whether noble or slave, no person could be so logically aristocratic now-a-days, as to plead the condition of these poor Egyptians when alive, in excuse for the barbarous treatment to which their corpses have been subjected after death.

MEMORIES OF THE JUNGLE.

I STOOD in the green shadows of the forest, and watched the deer dozing and grazing on the savannah. Their conduct puzzled me. What deep terror was that which drove these delicate beauties out into the full blaze of noontide?

The scene lay upon the golden banks of the Mico, which foamed and tossed through the forest behind me. A line of timber edged the river course, winding with each bend, and threading the mountains for hundreds of miles, until lost in the great wilderness of trees that borders the Atlantic. In front of me stretched a large savannah, smooth, and grey, and burnt, nourishing here a lonely calabash-tree, there a tangled clump of convolvulus and liana, sudden heaps of brightest colour. The round and naked hills of Mosquito seemed to quiver in dull heat; white balls of cloud flecked the turquoise sky. From time to time a breath of wind sighed across the savannah, bowing the grey grass, rustling in the long white "tails" of Spanish moss, shivering the tufts of scarlet and purple on the boughs of the wild calabash; then dying silently among the trees.

I seated myself on a grey stone, in the shade, and waited. All around were fragments of rock, broken statues, sculptured pedestals, and shattered columns. The forest trees were rooted in pyramids of stone, which their growth had overthrown and levelled; the flowering creepers and glossy-leaved "vines" which carpeted the earth, wound their arms smoothly over broken monoliths. Here lay a fragment of earthenware, painted in mysterious figures of black and scarlet; there a celt of polished

basalt, or the leg of a "metlaté" deeply carved in arabesques. Out on the savannah, beneath the "jicara" trees, masses of sculptured stone lay black among the herbage,—colossal heads, with eyes awfully distended, shattered legs and arms, and carven pedestals. Round me on every side were ruins, extending, as I knew, for a quarter of a mile along the savannah. Ruins of a race extinct, hieroglyphs of a language dead, awful memorials of a lost superstition, weapons and ornaments long since forgotten. Many such scenes have I looked upon in those weirdly forests of Central America, but to their mysterious fascination my mind could never grow insensible: the deep, hot, silent wood; the sad, grey plain; the still buzz of insect life; the bright flowers, and tender leaves; all the beauty and solemnity of tropical nature—amidst the graves and temples of a vanished race. Dull indeed must be the fancy of that man who would seek to draw a formal moral from this scene. Nature has spoken so eloquently that the voice of man may well be hushed.

I examined the stone that formed my seat. Hundreds of years ago, when the warlike mountaineers of Chontales marched blithely against the white invaders entrenched in their young citadel of Granada, this overthrown block was a great statue thirteen feet high. That broken cairn on which it lies was a stately pyramid, crowned with a dozen figures, and this the chief. These shattered lips, we may believe, never lacked their crimson smear when the tribe assembled to worship; the chain of severed fingers often encircled this breast, on which I curiously mark a Maltese cross. It needs but a glance at the stern features to be assured that the hero of this portrait was one mighty in war, and a leader of men. The Chondal sculptor, rude though he were, could scarcely fail in representing a type so characteristic of the warrior in all countries and times. Heavy, frowning brows, divided by a deep furrow, clean-cut eyes, broad jaw, and massive neck; these are signs that need not confirmation from the broad-bladed spear held to the chest in both hands. A warrior of the elect, a high-handed chief-

tain from his birth. Perhaps that small statue lying in fragments —a small, soft, womanly face, with gentle eyes and large, under a forehead wrinkled with age—was wife to the big hero; these rough-browed men mostly draw such tender women to their souls. Perhaps that broken bowl, painted with strange lines, and dots, and figures, had a place in the wedding feast, and the bridegroom filled it again and again with strong wine made of berries, while the timid bride returned the pledge in sober "tisté." They were notable drinkers, these "clowns of Chontales," but severe as Greeks to their womankind. Where are now their descendants? Where their gold, their populous villages, their warlike freedom, and their rude civilization? The traveller wanders over desolate hills, through burnt savannahs, along wet river banks, and there are none to answer his question.*

Turning from the forest, I looked again at the deer lying about the furthest "jicara" trees. Some danger must, I knew, be imminent, for although solitary deer may often be found on these mountains, browsing in the full heat of noonday, the herd will always take refuge in the shade, unless driven from it by suspected danger. Most probably, I thought, a jaguar or a puma seized one of their companions this morning, and they dare not re-enter the forest. No jungle-craft at my disposal could carry me within range of the wary animals at that hour of the day; so I sat still and waited.

No more is needed in a tropic forest to obtain hospitable admission to that great theatre in which is played sometimes comedy and sometimes tragedy most direful, that mighty playhouse, built, and warmed, and painted with a glory of loveliness, by the

* It is scarcely needful to assure the reader that this description, &c., of a Chondal holy place is as accurate as the author can make it. Some ethnologists among the very, very few who have studied Central America, are of opinion that the Woolwas of Mosquito are degenerate descendants of the ancient Chondals. Certainly they are a kindred race. The cross, of various shapes, was a sacred symbol among Mayas, Quichés, Astecs, and Chondals, long before Christianity reached them.

imperial sun and teeming mother earth; the theatre in which man's presence is an accident and an intrusion, in which, if perceived, it overclouds the mirth, and gives to the tragedy a different climax. The "mountains of old stone," as these ancient sepulchres are called by the natives, are always filled with living things—rabbits, armadillos, iguanas, snakes, and tiger-cats. Even King Jaguar himself does not disdain to abide there, if he can find a hole big enough to stretch his huge carcass in. I had not long to wait, therefore, before the curtain rose on a scene in the great forest drama which has been and is performing night and day from time to eternity.

"Tweet, tweety," chirped a "guatuso," or jungle rabbit, poking his droll red head from a hole in the overthrown cairn. The short fore-legs followed the head, then the round, sleek body, and then the long, kangaroo-like quarters. Merrily he hopped about, hither and thither, now nibbling the tendrils of a "vine," now scratching at a root with his long claws. There is no funnier animal in the jungle than a guatuso, unless it be a monkey or racoon, nor indeed is there any better eating. I was already engaged in computation whether this big rabbit in hand might not be a safer speculation than a deer in the savannah, when the little fellow suddenly uttered a cry of alarm and bounded homewards. Arrived at his hole, however, he did not enter at once, but raised himself on his hind legs to reconnoitre the enemy. A dreadful enemy it was.

Like a long polished necklace of jet and coral and pearl in alternate beads, the pursuer appeared, a living jewel that sparkled and vanished among the stones and fleshy leaves. The head, enamelled in black and scarlet, was half raised as he slowly wound along, and the eyes, small and rather dim, were fixed upon his victim. Beautiful rather than terrible he must have seemed to one who had never seen his like before. Slender in shape, glossy, and so richly, yet tastefully coloured, he reminded one of some antique ornament that Cleopatra or Semiramis might have

worn round her dusky throat when sitting in state upon her throne. But I knew the death that lay beneath the beauty; I recognised at a glance the terrible "coral snake." Now, I thought, is the opportunity to watch this process of fascination of which men tell, if indeed it be a real truth! Surely no snake living has such occasion to use it as the clumsy coral in chase of a healthy guatuso. For all his grace and colour, this is the most helpless of reptiles in taking prey, and while watching the slow movements of the deadly snake, I could not but wonder what the cause of his inactivity might be. Put a young corale of two feet long—he becomes stumpy afterwards—beside a rattlesnake or a "tuboba," his body seems as lithe and powerful as theirs; strip off his jewelled skin, the muscles are as symmetrical. Yet the rattlesnake or the tuboba, or any serpent that exists, is a hundred times more active, and therefore more dangerous to other animals.

Persons who believe in spasmodical providences will argue that the slowness of the corale was specially apportioned to him to preserve men from his deadly venom. Even supposing this reasonable, the desired effect must be due to some physical cause, and that cause is still to seek. The other side of the argument is not much studied in the jungle, but it is somewhat difficult to see why we should be thus carefully protected from the corale, while the tuboba is allowed to carry his poison as rapidly as he may please. Surely it is of little importance to any man whether he dies in twenty minutes or four or five hours, so his death be equally certain in either case. Most of us who have necessarily thought upon the subject seem to prefer the shorter period. Even the "sangre," the blood-snake, that most rare and horrible of reptiles, is far more active than the corale. It may be observed also in passing that slowness of movement is by no means an entire protection to us. I should say on the whole that more persons are killed by "corales" than by any snake that lives in the forest. The poor thing can't glide away when it hears steps approaching, and if a man put his foot upon it while hastening to

escape with all its little speed, what can the most amiable snake do but bite? For—I will admit it openly—I am fond of these creatures in a certain sense! I have killed hundreds of the venomous; I have tamed the pretty and harmless; I have kept many species, and watched them carefully; and I assert that dangerous reptiles are the most exciting study a man can have, they are so strange and beautiful and deadly.

Now, for the fascination! I thought, when the corale came fairly out, gliding with a slow and laboured motion, and carrying its head higher than do most serpents. But the guatuso, though evidently frightened, showed none of the signs that are said to accompany fascination. He looked round piteously, calling his note of alarm without ceasing, but the little creature evidently knew his pursuer's slowness. The mystery was soon explained. When the corale had arrived within three or four feet of his victim, an easy spring for any other serpent, a second head was thrust from the nest in answer to repeated calls of distress. Now, said I to myself, we shall perhaps verify another legend. The corale does not apparently fascinate the guatuso, but possibly the female guatuso will fight the corale, as, they say, sometimes happens. So I made a bargain with myself. If the rabbit dare to show fight in defence of her young, I will interfere; if not, a snake has an equal right to live with any other animal.

But it could be seen that the poor guatusos had no more intention of confirming jungle legends than had the corale: they showed no fight at all. The male hopped hither and thither, frantic with terror, while the female crouched over her nest trembling. Silent and deadly as an evil spirit the snake glided on. His scarlet rings faded and glowed by turns, now shining like the brightest sealing wax,* now dying into dull orange.

* This is not a poetic comparison I know, but it is that which occurs to every man in observing a coral snake. The red rings, which differ very much in tint in different specimens, seem to stand out from the skin just like drops of sealing-wax.

When within fifteen inches of the guatuso, a corale's leap, he seemed to pause, as if meditating a spring, but next instant his steady crawl was resumed. Then the mother's instinct showed itself stronger than any thought of safety. With a faint cry that seemed to bid her mate a last farewell, the doe-guatuso plunged into the recess, and the long, jewelled body of the snake flashed after her.

"Now, to reason calmly," sneered the witness of this scene to himself, feeling cynical, as do most men when a touching accident has taken place through their fault, "what possible good can this foolish little animal effect by thus sacrificing her life with her young? In that narrow hole she cannot fight; the snake must be more than a match for her there. Perhaps they are struggling at this moment in the dark centre of the tomb, among the painted urns and golden rattles, and polished celts of stone, lying around the ashes of this old warrior. Perhaps the little guatusos are lying, warm and soft, in his great funeral urn. Fancy a thousand slaves piling such a cairn, and yielding up their lives upon it like enough,—think of the blood expended, and tears and labour and wasted worship so many years ago,—to build a nest for a couple of rabbits! I wonder whether this stern old chief ever hunted down his foes and slaughtered their little ones as cruelly as the latest invader of his tomb! Likely enough, I suppose; beings as innocent and pretty and playful as these poor red rabbits, now dying over his bones.

"And where is your moral, my friend?" asked the lonely witness of himself. "Is there no apothegm to be extracted from this scene in the endless jungle tragedy?"

"Assuredly there is! *'Twas* better to be a Chondal chief than a Chondal slave! *'Tis* better to be a corale snake than a jungle rabbit."

"*And will be—?*" The witness had no answer to this asking.

A faint struggle in the hole's mouth! Then the rabbit leaped out weakly, bearing around her neck a brighter, daintier necklace

than ever jeweller could enamel. Within a foot of the entrance she rolled over; the snake unwound itself rapidly, looked at the cowardly mate with dilated eyes, hissed at him sharply in a manner that would have been comic in a less terrible creature, then glided back to its meal under the cairn. The bitten guatuso struggled for a moment on the ground, then died in seeming agony.

I stepped forward in haste. Disappointed by the corale in the matter of fascination, by its victim in the matter of fighting, there was still hope to confirm a third legend as to the effect of this snake's venom. I drew my bowie, and cut the rabbit's throat, severing both jugular and carotid: not a drop of blood flowed! The story, then, which all believe in the jungle, that a corale's bite instantly solidifies the blood, is *true*. The arteries were filled with a thick purple jelly! Close by was a large black ant-heap, piled up against a tree-trunk. I took the body of the guatuso, and put it down gently in one of the beaten tracks leading towards the nest, upon which thousands of ants hurried to and fro, each carrying aloft a green leaf gnawn perfectly round. Many a time I had watched these little beings, which, in fact, are far too obtrusive in the jungle to escape observation. On those occasions, strictly family events, I believe, in which the leaves are required, the inmates of the nest, or at least a great portion of them, are told off to cut them. These cutters must proceed a great distance to their work, for I never yet followed a road so far as to find them actually engaged. A second division marches with the cutters, and receives the leaves from them. Twenty or thirty yards it runs on the back track, bearing the load straight up in the air; at that distance stands the relay, which carries the leaves so much further on the road, and is in its turn relieved; and so to the nest.

The plump body of the guatuso thus suddenly set down upon their highway, naturally caused great emotion among such of the workers as were not smothered under it. They scurried over the

sleek fur, darting hither and thither; some dropped their loads in the excitement, others, more zealous, trotted to and fro, conferred with their friends, meditated, and exchanged ideas, still bearing their green banner sharply upreared. In five minutes the carcass was alive with ants; but in ten minutes more it was again deserted. The poison of some snakes these little creatures certainly disregard, but that of the corale, it appears, is not among those. It may be that the condition of the victim's blood is not pleasant to a dainty taste, and this is the view I feel inclined to take.

Throwing the guatuso into the bush, I returned to my seat, and resumed the position of spectator in this great theatre of Nature.

The inevitable commotion caused by the first scene—probably also the smell of the corale, which is very evidently perceptible to most animals—caused a break of half an hour in this jungle-play I was watching. The silence was dreamy; that living, murmuring stillness only felt in American forests, less solemn but infinitely more beautiful than those of the other tropic. Hotter and hotter, wave upon wave, the sultry beams poured down, and all living things sought refuge in the shade. The forest-flies, large as humble-bees and venomous as scorpions, ceased to balance themselves in sunny crevices of the leaves, and harassed me no more. The glossy black crickets swarmed no longer over my body, but thoughtfully stared me out of countenance from the shadow of a stick or leaf. The ugly spiders, vast and yellow and spiky, dread of all travellers and hacienderos, sank deeper and deeper in their holes along the forest verge, until naught could be seen of them save their straining claws around the edge. Small flies alone, the bright-winged jewels of Mosquito, resisted the drowsiness of the hour. They hung glittering in the sun-rays, they whizzed to and fro, they danced together in mid-air, buzzing and murmuring softly the while. So still was the forest, and dreamy, and beautiful beyond all utterance, that no glance upwards was needed to recognise that crisis of the tropic day, the hour between two and three in the afternoon. And still, in

spite of the heat, my deer were lying in the savannah under the thin jicaras.

I stretched myself beneath a tree, and laid my head upon the grim face of that old Chondal statue; then, in spite of all effort, I suppose I fell asleep. The awakening was sudden enough to try the nerves of a hero. Some soft object fell with great force upon my legs, and before I could spring up, it rushed—scaly and cold and slimy—over my neck and face, tearing the flesh with razor-like claws. Quick as a gun-flash it passed, and before my eyes were fairly open I heard the rattle of its claws upon a trunk. I wiped the blood from my forehead, and looked up. There the creature sat, just overhead, along a mighty bough; one glassy and vigilant eye, fixed upon me, and one distended claw deep-buried in the bark, were visible from below. But though his body was thus carefully concealed, the long taper tail, crossed with bars of red and rusty black, hung down far beneath the bough, and revealed his nature. I saw in a moment what accident had occurred. My friend aloft, a fine specimen of the delicious "iguana," or eatable lizard, had been peacefully basking on an outer branch of the forest above my head; absorbed in slumbrous delight, while his rough scales crackled in the heat, the rude push of a restless mate, or the excitement of a dream, or sudden fear of an enemy, had unhooked his claws from the bark, and he fell crashing and astonished to the ground; a chance that often befalls these big lizards, but very seldom, so far as I have noticed, with any ill effect. Nevertheless, it cannot be altogether pleasant to them, and it is perhaps for this reason that the iguanas mostly prefer a haunt in the close neighbourhood of sunny water. They swim admirably of course, and, when shot, sink immediately to the bottom, whether killed or no—a proceeding which they, very likely, suspect to be disagreeable to a hungry sportsman.

In wiping my cheeks and neck, which were deeply scored by those strong claws, I promised myself an ample vengeance upon

the hideous monster—the blood-curdling vengeance of the cannibal. I determined to eat him. Hideous beyond description the iguana is, and bold the man who first ventured to taste his flesh, but the experiment was soon repeated beyond doubt. I am not one of those who rave about a dish in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining it, or the repulsive nature of its appearance. It needs some courage to eat a "durien," but I cannot see that the moral victory in any way enhances the flavour of that harmless fruit. I have tried a steak from a "man-eater," and, hungry though I was, found it nothing more than tough. I have eaten most creatures that live in one or other tropic, but never did I find any ecstatic flavour in ugliness tout simple. My word may therefore be relied upon in declaring the flesh of the iguana to be very delicious; but its appearance is certainly terrible. A long lank body, very rough, yet flabby at the same time, a hideous head crowned with a red crest like human fingers with no bones in them, a dirty nondescript colour mixed of green and brown and brick-red, such are the features of this dainty. In length the iguana varies, according to its species, from three feet up to eight. I have seen them larger still, but rarely. The bright-green scaled, and the house iguana are alone rejected for the table. The specimen of which I speak was of the largest size, and of a kind particularly approved by American epicures. He sat in a tree already half dead, but still bearing a few green branches; such a tree as the tropical nature loves for her revelries of sensuous beauty. Pale orchids, ruff-like ferns, tendrils of climbing moss, thick-growing shrubs, lianas of every various hue, were piled one above another on the mouldering boughs. Scarce two leaves alike could be found side by side; broad leaves, spiked leaves, glossy leaves, upright, deciduous, pale, dark, yellow and burnished—all were heaped pell-mell together, all seemed to grow from a single trunk. Through the close meshes of the "ivy-vine," dainty fern-fronds showed their curly tips; purple dendrobia boldly clung to the lianas, parasites of a

parasite; thin-leaved cacti thrust their pink-flowering arms from every naked spot. Here a baby palm pushed its head recklessly through a pale sea of moss, unmindful of the dizzy depth below; there, a mass of flowers hung suspended in mid-air, saved in its fall by the elastic vines. An infinite, infinite world of life there is in such a tree! Beautiful things and hideous, poisons and antidotes, harmless creatures and deadly, the glory of life and the dull shadow of death! Who in a volume could tell the story of this tree and its inhabitants, could describe the variety, the loveliness of its vegetation, the millions of its living things, and the beautiful, horrible simplicity of the dramas eternally played there? I think none could do that theme justice—the beauty is too tender and the horror too keen. For there is a moral taught, beaten and branded in by jungle nature: that is—cruelty! From the ferocious jaguar, true king of beasts, which slowly drains the blood of its living victim, to the tiny ant which devours its helpless prey piece-meal, every beast of the forest revels in cruelty as in beauty. And man must learn his lesson from the instincts round him. Atrocities undreamed of in temperate zones he daily commits in these lovely lands, under inspiration of the fierce sun and savage instincts of the forest. How shall we cavil then, ruddy-faced dwellers in the snow and frost! the Nature of these lands is not the Nature we know! Bid the jaguar tear his prey like a wolf, command the alligator that he be merciful as the bear, give your order to the zopilote that he kill outright like a hawk; if these obey you, if the stealthy tropic creatures become frank and furious as those of our clime, then undertake the regeneration of man!

Life in the jungle, it may be observed, begets an enormous tendency to moralize.

Having selected a strong fish-hook from the collection in my pouch, and torn off a fragment of tiger-cat skin from my belt, I prepared to climb a neighbouring tree, to fly-fish for my iguana. But scarce was my foot fixed in the lowest bough, when, to my

amazement the creature turned full round towards me and looked upwards, as if the danger to be feared came from that quarter. I also glanced skywards through the branches; they were not so thick but that one could instantly comprehend the lizard's alarm. I myself was so startled as almost to fall.

Twenty yards above the tree-tops, black against the turquoise sky, hovered an enormous bird, a bird so vast that for a moment its size frightened me! I will not make even a guess as to the stretch of those huge wings, or the length of that giant body; it suffices to say that the Chilian condor would, I feel sure, have suffered in a comparison. The character of the head and the colour of the plumage I could not well make out, owing to the brilliancy of the sky and the closeness of the forest, but it *seemed* to me—I make the observation most guardedly—that the beak was not that of a vulture, nor was the neck bare. More I can scarcely say. The plumage appeared to be brown and grey, rough like that of most large eagles, and the legs were certainly carried in the manner of a hawk. Scarce an instant I stood staring: one spring set me on the ground, then, rifle in hand, I climbed the tree again. But the great bird had passed! I caught another glimpse of him sailing across the savannah far out of range, and then I never saw him more.

Hot and ragged with scrambling through the bush, I re-seated myself on the stone. A long pull at my flask I took, and recklessly I lighted a pipe, before my ideas were sufficiently collected to consider this matter properly. I knew well what the bird was, though to few civilized men has it been given to behold him. Who, indeed, on the Mosquito Coast has not heard of the aquilucho, that mysterious fowl so rarely seen, and so fervently worshipped? A great day is it for the Kingmen, the Ramas and Woolwas, and Lapi, when one of their tribe catches sight of this creature; a day of much rejoicing, of vast drunkenness, of many legends. It was one of the happiest yet most annoying moments of my life in which I sat and put together all my recollections of

the aquilucho, seen at length but not secured, the bird of which a single feather is thought worthy of preservation in our museums.

After this exciting interlude I sat quiet awhile, endeavouring to cool. The deer, I noted, were all upon their feet, as if alarmed by the smell of my tobacco, or else by the passage of the giant bird. A new animal also had made his appearance on the savannah since my last observation; a fine grey ox, which was grazing on the further side. With that unreasoning instinct which one soon learns in the forest, my eyes fixed themselves upon this animal, although no sign appeared to excite rational suspicion. Oxen are common enough in Chontales, where they are bred for the San Salvador market, and of course many of them stray from the herd and run wild; all through the forests of Mosquito such "cimaron" cattle are found. And yet my eyes fixed themselves obstinately upon this stray animal. Surely, I thought, after some minutes' watch, there is something odd about this business; those fore-legs seem strangely shaped, and his movements ——— !

The ox appeared to be walking, or lounging, if the expression be admissible, in a circle; breathlessly I waited till the off-side came under my sight. Slowly and carelessly he moved on, grazing here, and dozing there, but always circling round. Ha! well might they seem odd, those fore-legs! A man was walking beside the off-shoulder, with one hand on the near horn, and a gun in the other. The docile animal circled nearer and nearer to the herd, which regarded him suspiciously, but made no movement. I felt sure that he was as much interested in the event as the best bred retriever in English turnip fields.

A long half-hour I waited. The bucks tossed their heads impatiently, and stamped their little hoofs, but the does had apparently no suspicions, and mostly lay down again. By an accident, which I blessed fervently, the hunter chose his range at a point just opposite to me. I could have shouted with delight when I saw the long barrel—painted with black gum, that it might not sparkle—pushed over the ox's back. A jet of fire, pale in the

brilliant sunshine, shot forth, and the noblest deer of the herd leapt high into the air. Down the savannah they came headlong, rolling one another over in the panic. With head thrown back, and fore-legs gathered beneath him, a fine buck led the way; at fifty yards from me they had disappeared under the trees—but led by another monarch. The bravest of their bucks lay prone upon the grass!

I turned, while reloading, to look for my brother sportsman. Behold! his wondrous ox had developed a new accomplishment! See it now careering over the savannah like a Derby crack, bearing its master in safety to the hills! Loud and long I whooped in my finest jungle falsetto, before the hero would heed, but at half a mile's distance he pulled up and turned to look at me. I made the most impressive signals fancy could suggest, or memory recall from long-forgotten ballets. I advanced with arms delicately outspread, patted my chest, and pointed to heaven—upon my honour I had great thoughts of pirouetting on one leg, and kissing each hand alternately to him. These exertions were rewarded at last, as well they deserved to be. After loading his long "gaspipe" with most significant care, the hunter trotted towards me; I laid down my rifle, unbuttoning, however, the pistol-holster on my hip, and advanced. Wary, indeed, are the greetings upon those burnt hills by the Mico.

"Buenos dias, caballero," drawled the hunter, with his thumb on the hammer of his piece, and his finger on the trigger.

"Buenos dias," I replied, leaning, but without affectation, on the butt of my revolver. Then we glanced over each other.

My new acquaintance had a slender frame covered with yellowish-brown skin, dull as parchment. His long, straight hair, glittering eyes *à fleur de tête*, ill-formed nose, and wrinkled mouth, revealed the pure Indian blood at a glance; while, on his part, he recognised me, I trust, as a "macho" from whom no wanton injury could be apprehended. Simultaneously we dropped our weapons, and shook hands; then we drank a long "cocktail":

each from the flask in which I carried that mixture, and thus became friends—regular "compadres." The deer were packed on the ox's back, and we returned towards my camp. In walking triumphantly through the forest, I observed:

"That is a wonderful ox of yours. Is this strange mode of hunting common here?"

"No," replied the Indian. "It takes too much trouble to train the animals, and very many turn out ill after months of education. Chiquito is a beauty, isn't he? Wind and sun and season are nothing; show him the herd, and he will put you within range. He never failed me yet."

"Oxen do not look very likely creatures for such work," I said. "How do you train them?"

"Ah, señor! If folks would but give themselves the pains with oxen that is readily devoted to horses, they would soon find which is the cleverer animal of the two. I've been a breeder of different cattle all my life, and I know what can be done with each. I never had any animal of any kind under my hands so intelligent as Chiquito.

"But for hunting you must select the very cleverest young ox in the 'corral.' How is he to be known? I'll tell you, señor; take the most beautiful! Beauty and intellect, as goes my experience of animals, are much more closely connected than common fools think. As to mankind I don't give any opinion, for my life has passed on these lonely savannahs, in silent forests and desolate hills; of men and women I don't speak, not knowing much, but I believe the same rule governs them also; for mules and horses and cattle, I will answer for it, the most beautiful is the cleverest.

"Having thus chosen your ox of two years old, or two and a half, you tie his head fast to a post. Then with a short club you beat his horns, not hard, but steadily, with quick strokes. For a couple of months you thus tap him an hour or two daily; at the end of that time the outer horn gets quite loose, and might be

slipped off with a slight wrench. When this is found to be the case, the ox should be fitted with a pair of reins attached to his horns; and a steady peon should be set to drive him. Then untie him from the post. Of course his first movement is to bolt into the forest, but a pull on the sore horn soon stops that ambition. Then he mostly turns short round to gore, but a steady grasp of one rein forces him straight again. Some will back upon the driver and try to slack the reins; they always turn out well, those that attempt that clever trick, unless they grow regularly vicious. Chiquito tried it as soon as ever he felt the cord, and knocked his driver over. Fortunately I was there, or he would have been lost, and my peon also.

"In the course of a day or two the ox gets quiet, and answers to the rein well enough. Then he is taught to stand when jerked, to bend his head, to step evenly, and other little tricks. When his horns are quite healed, he still answers to the touch upon them,—that is, he should do,—but a very great many forget all their education when the pain has gone. Then he is taken out to the savannah, and practised round a stump.

"But not until your ox has been out two or three times after real game can his cleverness be judged. Some never do anything except just what they are told; others have a hundred little tricks when the deer seem frightened—Chiquito here will lie down and roll, covering me all the time; he will sidle up against the wind in a manner I never taught him; he takes as much interest in the hunt as I. And he's killed a 'tigre' too, has Chiquito! Here is your camp, caballero! If you would like a tiger hunt to-morrow, I will come for you early—Yes? Hasta la mañana entonces!"

THE TIGER-HUNT AT GHAUTSINGH.

PRAY, sir," I asked, "did you ever see a tiger? and if so, did the tiger see *you*?" The question was put to a broad-chested, sun-burnt, thick-bearded fellow, who had been sitting all night in the smoking-room of our hotel in Avignon, listening silently to our stories. After a moment's pause he answered, "Well, sir, I have seen a tiger, and he likewise saw me. It wouldn't become a man to say what might be the feelings of another quadruped when suddenly introduced to him, but I should think, judging by appearances, that tiger was scared badly! I treated him most shamefully rude. I don't greatly mind if I do myself the pleasure of telling you gentlemen that tale, for there's a heap of fun in it, I've always thought." And with this the gentleman began. "I can't see," he said, "that it's of much importance to you to know what my name may be, nor how it came about that I found myself some years since in the city of Ghautsingh. Again, if one looks closely, it don't greatly matter where Ghautsingh is situate, whether in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the Island of Ceylon, or the Straits Settlement. And if any one asks me the present name, business, or residence of any person mentioned in my story, I shall take it rough, and decline to answer. If you gentlemen accept these preliminaries, I'll tell you a tale of nineteen men, one tiger, and twenty fools, inclusive.

"The city of Ghautsingh is a very noble city, about as truly noble a city as ever you saw one. And the people of Ghautsingh are proud of their digging, I tell you!—proud of their public walks, proud of their courthouse, proud of their cathedral; and

they'd doubtless be proud of their bishop likewise if they knew him, for no gentleman, I hear, is more deservedly popular in the neighbourhood of his residence at Twickenham, England. There is an extensive machinery for justice, civil and criminal, in this happy city, of which, again, the inhabitants are proud; it delighted me much to find that all the judges and barristers possessed such sagacity, the course of business was no way impeded by their utter ignorance of the language of witnesses, police, and criminal. The chief military ruler of Ghautsingh is no smaller pumpkin than a general, you bet; commonly advanced in years, and of a miraculous haughty carriage. He looks at a man out loud, and never seems to think much of him. He speaks low when you're at a distance, and growls when you close up. I make a special note for the benefit of his aides-de-camp whenever I hear a minister read that prayer for them that's bearing children; there are few have to bear one as heavy, as mischievous, and as thick-headed as the commandant of Ghautsingh. You'll see, then, gentlemen, that this place is favoured alike by heaven and by the commander-in-chief. It's not a lively city, but I don't know where you'd find a nicer club than it possesses to camp in, when weary of human society. It's not a fast city, but the racecourse might still serve a turn or two if they'd only roof over the drains. It is not a social city, but that is owing to the abominable conduct of every dweller therein towards every other—any inhabitant will explain the how to you. As a mere passer-by I record my opinion, that every soul in Ghautsingh is a right-down good soul, and nobody's enemy except every other person's in the town—and his own.

"But there's an institution there of which the folks don't seem so perky as of the Bishop they can't see, and the General who can't see them—that is, the Botanical Gardens. Now I'm not all things in flowers, nor yet in trees, so to speak. I'd not take oath very loud as to the radical distinction between a pineapple and a pumpkin. But I've earned something reportable in the matter of

applause among folks who consumed no small stock of home-made gas about their gardens. I'll tell you how I do it. First I look at the walks and the beds, and if they seem square and trim, I say aloud, and, as it were, raptured, 'Madam,' I say, 'you've hit off the divine thing! Your resplendent garden, madam, reminds me of the blooming prairie, where the dahlia and the marigold, they stand in rows decorous; so that it's amazing for to contemplate 'em as I've done, madam, in the midnight march, when the Indians were around us, and the air as black as a crow at a nigger funeral!' 'La!' says madam. Or if the walks be just of the other fashion, a bit weedy, and the flowers set nohow; I say, 'Madam, you've hit off the divine thing! Your stately garden, madam, reminds me of a new clearing up Montana way, where the spotted puma seeks whatever he can get, and the savage cuss cultivates his back hair behind his ancestral bit of log timber!' That's the way to fix the female creature, when she thinks to get a rope on you about her flowers and such folly. But those gardens in the city I'm speaking of are something—or I thought so anyhow. Maybe 'twas the weeds I took for flowers, and worthless lumber that seemed to me so exquisitely pretty. I'd not deceive you by putting out my opinion as worth money, unless any man was downright pressing to pay for it. Maybe I never saw the real treasures of the place, as they call 'em. And I don't mind the rubbing of a brass cent if I didn't. The weeds of that country were sweet enough and bright enough to do my heart good, and seemed, like the wild birds and butterflies that flitted over them, and hung like diamonds in the deep sunrays, to fill all a man's soul with wonder and delight! I lived just in face of one of the gates of the gardens, and it grew to be my chief pleasure to stroll up the broad shadowy walks, when business left me an hour to myself. In the day time I loitered up and down, harkening to the hum and murmur of the insects, watching the little winged lizards flit from trunk to trunk, or standing to admire some basking reptile that clung flat along the bark, with his

crimson crest outspread, and emerald body gleaming in the sun. Winged creatures sat astride of every flower, and quivered and balanced themselves, spreading their pictured disks upon the petals, closing them and opening again, so that one could not tell whether 'twas a flower that had taken life, or a butterfly that had blossomed on a stalk. There were snakes, pretty harmless creatures, that lay like long skeins of satin in the sunny nooks, and there were horrid, beautiful things, that moved with soft rustling, like ghosts, among the shadowed corners of the shrubbery. Squirrels there were, no bigger than a mouse, that ran up and down the trunks, and peeped, and frisked away. Birds green as leaves and red as flowers, enamelled like jewel-work, changing and prismatic as diamonds, fluttered in the boughs at early morning; and the coo of wild doves, the pretty, distant cry of the 'wa-wa' monkeys, made evening musical. Ah, they're lovely, those gardens of Ghautsingh!

"Well, gentlemen, I'll say no more on this subject. What I wished to tell you was that the Ghautsingh Gardens were a favourite spot with me, for the study of nature, and other meditations not much affected in that city; and it was owing to my unmanly weakness for those pursuits that I saw a tiger once, and he saw me.

"We'd been banquetting one evening at the house where I stayed. There was some one married, or some one dead, and folks were interested in the event,—I don't mind now which it was, nor who, nor why. We'd drunk freely about the house on the occasion, and we'd eaten something, I tell you! so that when, towards two in the morning, the last of our guests whizzed down the avenue in a big buggy and a state of liquor, there were few heroical actions I didn't feel fit to undertake right off, for the love of a Chinese *doby*-girl, with eyes like black beetles, and hair like a greased horse-tail, whom I'd met down by the riverside that day. There were few things, very few things, that I didn't feel the man within my bosom quite up to on that night. But one of

'em was—to go to bed. I'd known the sensation before, and I've known it since; a mighty curious sensation that is. There's an earthquake on the road towards your respectable dwelling; there's battle and murder in the next block, and sudden death at the doctor's next door. But come earthquake, or battle, or death, 'Damme,' says you, 'if I go to bed!' That was my haughty remark that night.

"So I went into the verandah with my friend, and we lighted cheroots. The air was clear as water, the moon shone bright as though she'd no other spot in the universal world to lighten up, except our little bungalow and gardens. Looking across the lawn, on which every blade of grass sparkled as with hoar-frost,—between the trunks of nutmeg trees, and mammy apples, and nameless, sweet-fleshed fruit that studded the grass;—beneath the great crowns of cocoa-nut which sparkled in the moonlight;—over the big, spreading leaves of the banana trees, that hung motionless and glistening in the stilly air;—beyond them all, t'other side the way, in fact, I saw the black archway of big boughs which roofed the entrance to the gardens. And I said to my friend, 'Let's smoke our cheroot in those walks across the road there.' But he said, 'I'm going to bed!' and I felt such contempt for him and virtue, I didn't even wait to swear; but marched down the steps and along the avenue. And in three minutes I stood in the pitchy shadow of the walks. Well, gentlemen, I've told you what like are the Ghautsingh Gardens by day, and I could hold out this hour on their beauty at midnight. But maybe you'd think a man was boring you, and that is taken as rough among friends. I'll not dwell upon the stillness of the night, therefore, nor tell at length how each leaf, and each hanging orchid, and each great frill of fern upon a bough, glittered in the moonbeams, or, more pretty still, stood out in shadowed tracery against the pale-blue sky. I'll not strain my fancy to describe the swarms of fire-flies, which flashed from tree to tree in sudden sheets and floods of silver, and vanished again in dark-

ness. I'll be almost dumb as to a thousand flower-scents that filled the air with sweetness in successive strata—the "Sundal Malam," Love at Night, as the Malays prettily call it, the cape-jasmine, the perfumed vanille. It's enough to say that, what with banquettings, cheroot, and the beauty of the scene, my feelings rose to that extent, I began to think seriously about the other world.

"Well, boys, that's a subject that has always interested me whenever it's chanced to come uppermost, owing to extra'ornary information that I gained upon it in early life. I'd great advantages, it's not to be gainsaid. I don't know that ever I met the man—barring an Indian *padre*, up Costa Rica way, who did his duties in a mad house—with more sound, but various knowledge of the devil's virtues than old Josh, a blind buck nigger we had at home in Illinois. Josh wasn't much of a man for this world, but he was a strike for the next, mind you! There were ideas that nigger had such as I've sought for vainly under any other colour, red, or white, or higglee-pigglee. Among his notions was one about the devil—there was a good ten thousand beside, but this one specially agitated my boyish bosom. Says Josh—'Mars'er,' says he, 'don' you tink old Satan's black; it's a darn bad compliment to coloured folk to tink it! I a'nt ole Satan. Nor don' you tink he's white; old Satan a'nt a gen'lman! Tell you what he be! Ole Satan be stripe! His skin is red an' yellow, becas the yellow folk an' the Ind'ans they're at the handle eend of a' mischeef. An' he's got white bellum, becas white folk is at the bottom of a' mischeef. An' he's stripe a' over his back, becas the bad niggers they atop of a' mischeef. That's what old Satan be coloured!' says Josh.

"Whenever I think serious of the other world, I always chuckle by the hour together at that buck nigger's idea of the devil. And it's natural, being deeply meditative that night, that I should be uncommon tickled with the notion. I was strolling along a high, deep walk, cut clean out of the shrubberies. It was black as a

well. The moonbeams shot through here and there, and frosted up a twig or flower. The areca palms stretched their fronds above, and glittered like an icy waterfall. But at bottom of the path it was dark and pitchy. Just beyond, a cross road had been cut, and there the moonlight streamed across, white as silk. I was chuckling out loud. On a sudden, in the snowy break in face of me, Josh's devil showed himself! Not standing out brave like a man and a friend, but creeping, crouching, with head down-pressed, and fiery, blazing eyes turned full upon me. I could make out his red and yellow skin, his white breast, and the stripes of the bad niggers. He stood and I stood. I wasn't much scared, because of that banquetting. 'Darn me!' I says, 'if here ain't ole Satan! Now what in thunder does he want here away?'

"I turned the matter over, and it struck me to ask him. Satan didn't seem talkative any, but he was real steam power at a stare. I went a bit closer, and then I saw he'd a tail, and a lively one. Most like tiger, I thought. He didn't seem a bad sort, so I pushed a bit nearer, and then he lifted his head, and looked in a manner haughty. 'Twasn't likely I'd stand any of those airs, was it? I put my hands to my mouth, and I rushed right at him, yelling like a Comanche war chief when he sees a child that has lost its nurse. I ran my hardest, and shouted my darnedest, but old Satan was quicker, I tell you! Yes, sir! To see the bolt that wicked creature made would have done old Cotton Mather's heart good, and sent up his chapel stock above par. A growl and a clash and a rushing through the bushes was all the sign made by the mean-spirited cuss, when I went for him, and how it came about that I didn't do anything in particular for an hour after, but sat under a tree, looking about me at the general creation, and wondering what it all meant, that's a mystery I won't attempt to open; for a creature more shame-faced and more gentle-hearted than that old Satan you never saw off the platform of a Temperance Society, or the murder dock of an Assize Court.

"I went home, gentlemen, and I didn't go to bed. I sat chuckling and thinking, remembering and larfing, like champagne stirred in a glass from time to time. You see there were great capacities for high-class jokes in the presence of a full-grown though shamefaced, tiger, about the most fashionable promenades of Ghautsingh. There was an old clergyman about that settlement at that time;—Lord! I hope he's there still, for I bear him no malice, though unused to being fired at free from the pulpit. I'll tell you how that was. This parson used to say, 'Give folks music and they won't drink, nere a drop! That's your Temperance ticket,—Music!' he says. He tried the idee once upon a time among the seafaring folk, but it hung on the wheels. Folks heard his banjo and his wife's pianer, and his daughter's sopraner, and it made their throats crack like an overpressed boiler only to listen. So when the first performance was through, they calls for gin and arrack. Says the parson to me on the platform, mighty flustered,—'This is a darned mistake!' says he. 'They han't no business to want liquoring, and roll me flat into an arable farm if ary one of 'em shall have it! Scriptur's dead against the principle!' bawls he to the seafaring folk. 'Allow me, Parson,' says I, with exquisite politeness. 'Your extensive and elegant learning has sorter stopped up your brains. Scripture tells us that when King David brought Saul over to the temperance movement and stopped his allowance, the instrument he used was a harp, whereon David was 'A 1 much recommended' among all folks of his time. But you, Parson, you play the banjo! and you'll pardon me if I publicly declare—that never on this earth was a darneder chucklehead at that employment than yourself!' The seafaring folk said I was right, and smashed every stick straight away; but the parson, he took it rough, and hit hard next Sunday at national vices; specially singling out what he chose to call American irreverence. In regard to which I'd tell him, there's as much true religion, as much worship, and a thousand times more practical Christianity in any village of Illinois, than ever

was or ever is like to be among the traders and soldiers of Ghautsingh.

"That story has nothing to do with my tiger, nor would I deceive you, gentlemen, in claiming any share in the moral. I was going to say that this fat parson was in the habit of wandering about the Gardens before daylight, and at other hours which decent-bred people don't know by sight. I'll admit I had serious thoughts at first of lying by and keeping dark, and letting the old fool run his chance of meeting the creature. But then, thought I, in maturely weighing the *pros* and *cons*, this tiger is so shamefaced, he might run, and then Parson, he'd get that immortal glorious, he'd bust up with the sound of hymns and tea-urns. That's a national vice of English folk that was not mentioned in his discourse. So, on the whole, I resolved to let the fact be known and set the government shikaris to work, which I did."

The American gentleman paused in his tale, emptied his glass, and rose. "But you have not come to the tiger-hunt at all!" I exclaimed.

"Sir," said the story-teller, "we're all young. The house, though new, seems indifferent well set up, and neither earthquakes nor sudden death are common in these parts. To-morrow night, or next week, please the powers, I'll do myself the pleasure of telling how we hunted that tiger, and what came of it all. Good night!"

II.

It was not until several days afterwards that the American gentleman told us the result of his midnight meeting with a tiger in the public gardens of Ghautsingh. When the opportunity arrived, however, he began abruptly thus:—"Just as the red and hazy dawn was wakening the palm leaves, which had drooped through night in sleep; just as the first monkey call, far off in the forest-clothed mountains, began to gurgle faintly; just as one big

green parrot, in a mango tree, uttered its first dubious chuckle to the faithful mate reposing by its side; just as in the big town below burly Chinese coolies began to bestir themselves about the house that their wives might slumber peacefully for hours to come, and idle natives to curse their better halves to make them rise and work; just at that time I threw my rifle on my shoulder and strode across the lawn towards the place where I'd seen the tiger over-night. I'd thought to be first to mark the slot of the beast and measure it, but there's a something, a fear and shrinking of all nature, a nameless, unseen thrill, which reveals, for hours after, the tiger's passage. Every dog that saunters by the trail whines and cowers; every ape chatters eagerly; the very birds seem to feel his late presence in the brilliant air. I never yet knew the creature that couldn't scent a tiger a day afterwards, except man; which is the poorest of self-protecting animals after all. When I got to the spot where he had crossed the walk, there were ten or fifteen coolies, gardeners and such like, standing in a little group around, with pale faces scrutinising the earth. They leant on their tools and whispered. By them were half a dozen dogs, with drooped tails, whining and mightily uncomfortable. All made way for me, and I examined the tracks. 'Twas the first tiger slot I'd seen, and it startled me some. The pad was as big as a saucer, and the entire track would not have been covered by a soup-plate. 'Twas a full-grown specimen I'd made to run the night before, that was certain. I went down to the city.

"My! What a sensation it was when the news spread! All day through there was no talk except of the tiger in the Gardens. Stock was stationary, and shares nowhere. The man who'd actually seen a tiger found his life a burden that day, and as for myself—I once nearly thought the Governor himself was going to speak to me! He didn't, but I'd almost say he thought of it.

"But it was at the Club as the excitement ran highest. Lord! How they 'gased,' the young clerks and little ensigns! Says

Carl Ritter, the Dutchman, to me, 'Why didn't you go back and get your rifle, and shoot him dead?'

"'Why, for many reasons,' says I, riled. 'Among others, because I've always strove hard to keep my mind on a just balance between two extremes.'

"'What extremes?' says he.

"'Why, between Solomon and Carl Ritter.'

"They larfed. And says Petitpoint, of Lagrand's house, 'It may be *bête* to say so, but I *should* admire to meet that creature alone, as you did!'

"'*Bête* indeed,' I replies. 'For I've no doubt that would be just the wish of the creature himself!'

"They larfed. And says Flathers, the editor of the *Ghautsingh Blusterer*, to me,—'We know you're an old hunter, and have shot free over the prairies. Now how would you think I ought to tackle a tiger?'

"'You? Why, in print, man!'

"They larfed. And says Heath, the aide-de-camp to that old beast of a Governor I've told you of, says he, 'You're bright thith evening, thir! Don't you think any of uth would thtand to a tiger?'

"'*You* would, Cap'n, I'm sure,' says I, politely.

"'You flatter me, thir!' he replies, looking as pleased as a red macaw when its head's scratched.

"'No, Cap'n,' I says. 'It's only justice. I've seen you in attendance on the General, and the human creature as would stand *him* would stand anything.'

"They larfed. 'Well,' says Maitland, 'I shall have a 'station' by to-morrow night.'

"'I would!' says I.

"'Whereabouts would you recommend?' asks he, eagerly.

"'Why as near to pretty little Kate Towers as her mother would let me creep,' I said.

"They larfed. But old Cap'n Dymoke, a good man, he drew

me on one side, while the others took their cues for pool, and talked seriously. 'These boys are not altogether joking,' said he. 'They've lots of grit, and they'll go into the jungle to look for this creature sure as rain on Sunday. Now I'd admire to get ahead of 'em if it was anyways possible, and to have you with me. What d'ye say?'

"'Say?' I answered. 'What 'lives' are they playing?'

"'Dollar and five dollar,' he said. 'What's that to do with it?'

"'Why,' I remarked thoughtfully, 'I've played up at Hong Kong at five dollar lives, and twenty dollar pool. That's thirty-five dollars one may lose; just the stakes you'd propose to win in this little game—twenty-five dollars the government reward, and ten dollars for the creature's peltry. But at pool, you see, one has three chances, and when they're all lost, a man may 'star.' But in the other game, if one loses the first life, the match is up for this side eternity. Don't value the idea, Cap'n! My life's worth more than thirty-five dollars and glory! If those boys want a spree in the jungle, instead of spreeing in the club here, let 'em have the change. It's only a chance of fever and a fair hope of rheumatism. I'm not in it, Cap'n, as a serious investment. Look ye here! I've hunted most creatures, from grisly bears to Indians. I've scoured the prairies. I've made my mark. But 'twas in the way of business. If, as a matter of business, I saw my way to anything of plunder, I'd take your tiger single-handed; but I say, and I mean most distinctly, that the man who goes to meddle with a tiger out of his business is a chuckle-headed idiot. Don't let anything I've said deter you, Cap'n, if ambition stirs you up and glory leads the way, but don't, either, ask my temperate opinion when you're brought back here with your brains outside your head; nor even when I'm carrying you in procession to the court house to claim those twenty-five dollars reward!'

"So the Cap'n took counsel and lay by. But the boys, they just grew mad as the night wore on. They sent a man down into the city, and he fetched half a dozen Ram-Sammys straight

away;—you're as safe in calling a shikari 'Ram-Sammy' as in addressing a head keeper as 'Mr. Smith, Sir.' The Ram-Sammys were hot and eager for the fray. They saw a heap of chances. First, a big drink. Then a pile of dollars. Then, employment for every loafing scoundrel in the Bazaar. Then, a reasonably pious hope of picking some gentleman's pocket. And lastly, an everlasting draw for ever afterwards upon the purse of every man present. So they were delighted, and sang a song outside the Club, to the music of two kettle lids and a fig barrel. It was all settled before midnight. The Ram-Sammys and all their yellow kin were to go out at dawn and track the beast. They were to build a station, and to buy an old goat or two for a decoy. And in three days' time the noble sportsmen would find all ready—except the tiger.

"I'd not wish to be anyway rude, gentlemen, so I won't ask whether you do your washing at home, or whether any of your country relations have that habit. If you don't, I despair of making you or the cleverest man conceive what a time we had in Ghautsingh while the station was being built by the Ram-Sammys. Lord! It was just pretty—I sat and larfed, till my jaws was so stiff I was reduced to pray most fervently that the darned thing would stop, or the earth would open with larfing and swallow us all up. It was cruel! There were some of the boys who had such notions about a tiger as it ain't fitting for a human person to give utterance to outside the walls of a hospital; they were that trying to the man as can see a joke. Young Carl Ritter was the most unfeeling. He said to me one day, 'A tiger can smell a man a long way off, can't he?'

"'Reasonable,' I answers, 'it depends on the constitution.'

"'But he aren't afraid of buffaloes, and such like, is he?'

"'Not in general,' I says, 'unless he's been on the big drink for a month or two?'

"'Then suppose I was to put on a buffler's skin, as you do on the prairie, and creep up to him—Don't you think I might do something?'

"'Yes, you might,' I says, gravely, though in severe anguish at the time. 'But I'd recommend you to do it before setting out.'

"'What's that?' says he.

"'Why, make your will, you fool!' I shouted, feeling dreadfully bad.

"If these three days had been at Midsummer instead of Christmas, I'd not have lived through them. So near a thing as that it was! Just three minutes between the longest and the shortest day would have finished me. But they got through at last, and the Ram-Sammys came in from the jungle, declaring they'd seen the creature day by day, and could have killed him a hundred times if they'd been willing to deprive the gentlefolks of their amusement. I'll not believe that one of them had been beyond the 'station,' except poor old Ismael, a convict and an honest man. He went beyond the station, and a long way beyond. Poor, poor old Ismael! He loved me, that battered old heathen; he was like a dog to me. I engaged him as watchman at my little 'go down,' as they call their warehouses at Ghautsingh. From the first month he served me, the creature had taken a fancy in his stupid head, just to worship my shoe-ties. He got a notion I wished to shoot the tiger, and therefore, without a word, he went out by himself into the jungle to seek for him. Ismael didn't find the beast, but the beast found him, poor heathen. And on that third night, just before the Ram-Sammys came in with their lying tale, my watchman, what was left of him, passed down the street on a stretcher. I went out, and asked what was the thing they'd got there? The black fellows threw off the covering, and I saw—I saw the ghastliest sight ever my eyes rested on! Eh, it was horrid! Ismael's face was scarce injured;—his eyelids lay peaceful on his cheeks, and his long grey moustache curled down upon his chest. But the face lay *flat*. For the whole back part of the poor creature's skull was cut clean off, like as an axe would do it, save that each great claw had crashed separately

through the bone, and left long jags between, just as a blow from a man's outspread hand will make five streaks on a boy's cheek. And the face lay like a mask, *lower* than the neck. No man, and no painter, could describe how awfully unnatural that looked! I shuddered—and these eyes have seen strange sights, mind you! Ay, and I'll confess my heart turned sick, like a boy's at glimpse of sudden death.

"Well, gentlemen, we had a gay party at the club that night, though there were not a few that looked mighty grave when they heard of poor Ismael. I right down enjoyed that dinner, I did! Darn me if ever I enjoyed a meal more sincerely! there were nineteen of the shikaris there, besides myself and Cap'n Dymoke. 'Are you coming?' said one of 'em after another to us. 'No!' says we, 'but we'll be proud to drink to your success!' And they drank, bumpers every one! 'We'll have another bottle each to the tiger, which is a good man tho' overmatched,' cries Dymoke. 'Oh yeth, fair play you know!' says Heath. And so we'd another bottle of skimpin each. 'I guess we'll now drink to the heroes who're about to fall,' I observed. And we drank. 'And to the ladies who will congratulate those who come back!' And we drank. 'And to the ladies who will congratulate them that stop away!' And we drank. 'And to immortality.' And we drank. 'Likewise sudden death!' And we drank. 'Darn me,' I cries, 'we'll now drink to the liquor!' And we drank. 'Now we start fair for the evening!' observed Dymoke.

"Good Lord! Lord! how they did sop themselves, those nineteen heroes! It wasn't by glasses, nor yet by bottles, one could rightly measure that night's liquor: it was by the manner they proposed to handle the tiger, as a man could judge. There were those who seemed resolved to fire at his tail, and those who proposed to amputate his paws. The Ghautsingh folks were determined to keep the skin fine when they get the chance at a Bengal beast. But Carl was best, as usual; he took advantage, and got tight first. 'Grasp th' cretur' by th' horns!' he said;

thinking of his buffalo. "He ca-ca-can't hurt a flea then!' Towards ten o'clock the Ram-Sammys came to guide the heroes through the jungle. And they got into their buggies any how, head and tail together, and drove off. Dymoke and I chuckled for awhile, and then came in the old porter of the club. Says he, 'The gentlemen have forgot their guns!' 'Good job too,' says Dymoke; 'they might have shot something.' 'No!' I says; 'go and fetch some more Ram-Sammys, and send the guns after 'em! Cap'n, I'm going to snooze here for two or three hours, and then I'll have out my buggy, and we'll drive to the place.'

"But it was close upon dawn when I woke up. I hadn't undressed, and Dymoke was ready in the stretching of a yawn. We climbed upon the trap, and set off in pitch darkness for the jungle. I had a guide with me. In half an hour's time we descended and entered the forest. It was just daybreak. Ay, and the morning was beautiful! First we made our way through a tangle of wild pineapples, all fleecy and webbed with dew. The plumy crowns of the bamboos, and stretched fingers of the palmettos, were weighted down with moisture, and a glittering little shower descended on our heads as we crushed through. Then we came to a marshy spot, where were canes of a hundred shapes and colours—purple, and yellow, and red, and speckled. Lilies sprung there, just opening their cups, timidly like, in the early sunrays. We went deeper into the forest. The big-leaved and fleshy undergrowth died suddenly out, the trees grew bigger in girth and taller, the flowers disappeared. The twinkling rays of the new-risen sun could not penetrate that great arch of everlasting leaves above our heads; it seemed as if the dial had gone backwards, and we were walking again in the dusk of dawn. Big ants' nests began to block the space between two trunks; domes of termites, piled heaps of mud, where stinging flies bred and buzzed, were suspended on the boughs. The noise of birds, and the flutter of painted insects, which gave life to the waste without, ceased in this dim solitude. There was no living thing

here, save a crawling, shapeless beetle, which now and then crossed our path, and a line of ants on the foray. We went on, our footsteps unheard, our voices hushed and muffled in the mouldering air. There was a smell of death about the place. The trunks rose blackly from a putrifying soil. No green leaf nor flower could be seen, except, now and again, a pile of monkey cups at the foot of an old tree, or a huge ruff and frill of pallid fern, or a sickly, colourless orchid. No man but must have felt the dreary, dead solemnity of that fearsome wood! We went on silently, following the guide.

"Suddenly he turned. 'The station's there, gentlemen,' he said. 'And by G—!' I whispered, 'the tiger's been here too, Dymoke!' I pointed downwards. Deep indented in the black, soppy earth was the print of the creature's foot, the print a tiger makes when crouched and prowling; a sign I'd known well in tracking jaguars down to New Mexico. How did I recognise it? Why, easy enough! The pad of the foot was crushed down at the back part, the claws hard pressed into the soil, and the paces close to one another. When such a creature is just walking past, he steps out free and bold, at his full height; but when he knows there's prey or danger near, he slouches down, drops his head, and gets the weight of his big carcass on the shoulders.

"Well, the sight of those tracks roused me up. I ran on along the trail, which was printed six inches deep, and in another instant came upon the clearing where they'd built the station. Lord! what a sight that was! There was a big tree in the centre, and on its trunk the Ram-Sammys had raised their stage. Under it was a stake, from which a broken rope dangled, and the blood and trampled footprints round showed me that the decoy had been fastened there. But as to the nineteen martial heroes! How shall I tell you how they showed? There were four of 'em upon the stage, dead asleep, one with his head hanging over the edge. There were seven comfortably snoring among the but-

tressed roots of the tree, and two more within ten feet of the decoy. As to the other six, they were lying around anyhow, some propped against trunks, some full length on the bare ground. And Lord save us, the bottles that were strewn about! that small clearing looked like the waste house of a wholesale spirit merchant at Amsterdam. I'd take my hat off and swear hard never was so much liquor carried by so few men! The ground was sopped with it, and so likewise were the nineteen heroes. Where were the Ram-Sammys? you say! And I answer,—I'm darned if I know or could ever ascertain. The tiger had tramped round and round that clearing, smelling here and pondering there, half the night through, as we could see by his tracks; but nary soul of those martial fellows had wakened; not even when the creature carried off a fat goat that was tied in the very midst of 'em. He'd danced round them nineteen fools asleep, running in and out like a girl at play.

"We woke them up, and pretty blank they looked you may say. I took hold of Heath, and I addressed him gravely:—'This is a bad business, Cap'n!'

"'Yeth,' he says, 'dear me!'

"'No, Cap'n, I guess it be rather the reverse of that. The ladies 'll hold you all rather cheap in Ghautsingh.'

"'The tiger didn't give uth a chanth,' he says, sulky.

"'He gave you a very solemn chance, Cap'n! A chance of repenting all your little sins, and securing such place in the other world as befits you. Look about!' and I showed him the foot-prints.

"'Dear me! How very clothe!' says Heath, cool as that. Didn't seem a bit touched by the magnanimity of the creature. I remarked:—'Don't you ever think to make such a fool of yourself in our forests! American jaguars aren't so polite.'

"'Not polite? You've theen a deal of them!'

"'Fair!' I said, calmly. 'We've communicated.'

"'I thought tho. Habith are catching you know.' And that

youth chuckled an hour after over his little joke. 'Twas cruel to be caught up so at that moment. I took Dymoke by the arm, and hurried out. 'I'm bad,' I said."

The American gentleman paused. "And what became of the tiger?"

"Don't know. He wasn't seen any more!"

"And is the tale really true?" asked some one.

"True in the main," I interposed. "I think, sir, I could tell you the name by which Ghautsingh is known upon the maps."

"Don't, sir, don't!" exclaimed the American gentleman, rising. "I've many friends in the city we've called Ghautsingh. If you know the secret, keep it. Good night, gentlemen!"

ON LAKE NICARAGUA.

IT was before dawn, one morning in January, that I first embarked on the lake of Nicaragua. Our canoe lay in a reedy creek, overshadowed with big black trees. Tall canes and plumy rushes,—the haunt of cranes, and waterfowl, and alligators, and eel-like snakes,—almost hid the little craft from sight; and when we were aboard, with guns and harness and baggage, a passer-by might have been unconscious of our presence at the distance of three feet. Pulling ourselves along by the stout reeds, rustling among the stems and over-tangles of floating weed, we made our way towards the open lake. Now and again a quick plunge, or a great swirl of water, told the hurried flight of a big rat or a sea-cow. Wings fluttered, notes of violent alarm rose suddenly on our passage. But we pushed steadily on through the wilderness of canes that formed an arch above our heads, and at length reached the open.

South and north and west the great lake stretched before us, all its boundaries hidden in the darkness. One hundred and twenty miles in length, forty-five in breadth, studded with islands bearing a population of thousands, it should rather be called an inland sea than a mere lake. It has a land breeze and a sea breeze, storms, cyclones, and calms, like a very ocean. And all travellers from those parts will bear witness that no water, salt or fresh, is more dangerous to sailors. Winds gather in the high lands of Chontales, behind the tall peaks of Ometepec, Mombacho, and Madera, and sweep down on its expanse with terrible violence. The water rises on the instant, and waves wash up

and cross each other from half the points of the compass. And no warning is given, no change of sky or temperature advises the watchful sailor of an approaching storm. From a clear and sunny heaven the blast swoops down upon him, and within five minutes the spotted sharks may be butting each other over his body. But no such peril befel us that day. With the rising sun a gentle breeze sprang up, which rippled the surface of the lake and filled our sail delicately. All the morning through we glided pleasantly towards the tall peak of Ometepec, and in the afternoon, when the wind fell, we were already under its palm-crowned shore. Then we took in our useless canvas, unshipped the slender mast, and grasped our paddles. Steadily we coasted along, passing many a green and sheltered cove, many a grove of palms, many an orchard of luscious fruit. From the water's edge the ground rose gently for a mile or more; then suddenly sloped up in rock, ravine, and stony meadow covered with short, fine grass, and fields of pallid indigo. No houses, nor signs of man's dwelling, were visible, though the land is thickly peopled. Trees everywhere, of a thousand colours and growths, clothed the cone itself, from base to highest shaft. We paddled on, over the smooth, clear water, which lay still as oil in the mountain's lee, until the sun went redly down behind it. Then was a glorious scene beheld, which I shall not endeavour to describe. The ridges of the volcano, the distant hills of Chontales, over which we had lately wandered, shone with prismatic colour, as if in emulation of the glowing sky. The soft foliage hanging above our heads took new tints and shadows; the red and dazzling glow on rock and "scar" was reflected in the water beneath our paddles. And at length, as the last flush died suddenly in the sky, we beached the canoe under a solemn "ceiba-tree," hung with short "tails" of Spanish moss, and leapt ashore.

It was a small, sandy nook to which we had steered our course. Two or three "bongos," or cargo-boats of the country, rocked all unguarded upon the water. A few canoes of lighter construc-

tion lay dry upon the beach, and fragments of rude gear, broken paddle and mast and rope of bark, were strewn around. From the cove a narrow path wandered among the orange-groves and papyas upwards towards the village. We followed it in single file, overtaking small troops of Indian girls carrying jars and gourds of water, and walking silently and sadly, after the manner of their race. Our cheery salutes they scarcely answered, but glanced at us stealthily with prominent, shining eyes. Not pleasant to look upon in general is an Indian girl, whether Aztec, or Toltec, or Maya, or Quiché. Nicaragua was once famed for the beauty of its women, but that honourable repute has been lost with so many others. There are those who still speak with some enthusiasm of the aboriginal attractions, but their experience has doubtless been more fortunate than mine. Among the mixed, or white population, self-styled, pretty faces are not very uncommon, though infinitely more rare than in any European country; but the Indian girls have not even those points which never fail the mestiza, in eyes, and hair, and delicacy, if not symmetry, of limb. Their locks are long indeed, but coarse and harsh, only to be sleeked with infinite grease. Their eyes are always placed, as the French term it, *à fleur de tête*, a peculiarity very charming in some rare instances, but not commonly agreeable; they have neither the clear brightness of Caucasian orbs, nor the velvet softness of African, but shine with strange reflections, like strong light upon ink. Their figures are frequently good in each part, but rarely graceful; and their heads are disproportionately large. Such is my most charitable description of the Indian woman, as she now appears, after three centuries and a half of peonage. But, as I have before said, there are travellers who have enjoyed a more favourable view of her.

A quarter of a mile from shore, among fruit-trees and flowers, shadowed by great grey trees, palm-thatched, creeper-twined, lay the village. Each cane-built hut stood apart in its own little clearing, surrounded with an impenetrable fence of cactus or wild

...dwellers. Half-nal
brightest flowers and orchids, were
of which neither shape nor ornam
earliest period of which remains con
beating "tortillas" between their h
the hot baking-stones. In the dwelli
their hammocks, dully staring at the
and smoked beside them. No word p
but who can tell what strange new tho
melancholy foreheads? What memori
score of years, have lately been aro
Mexico, by the history of their own ki
nay, I know it for certain, there were
dreamy smokers, swinging that night
minds were, and are, strangely troubled
There has been much secret overlooki
much slow discussion, lasting from nigh
week, as to the old government which th
glorious days when this broken race was
and famed far and near for the beauty of
resurrection is that which all dwellers in Sp
be at hand,—the resurrection of the India
it will probably take

Never, even in the worse days of Spanish rule, was any dignity of the church closed to aboriginal worth; and the highest position of the Central American hierarchy has once and again been won by them. But the glorious proclamation of liberty and equality was needed before the civil and military careers in these countries could be opened to the darker races. Carrera, Gardiola, Juarez, Martinez, and a hundred other Indians who now fill the highest posts in each republic of Spanish America, are the men of the revolution, the immediate result of that republican proclamation. Many of them are great scoundrels, beyond doubt; but many, indeed most, of the Indian soldiers and statesmen are honest and enlightened to a degree which might serve as example to their former masters. One quality they all have—courage, whether moral or physical; and their intelligence—excepting, perhaps, in the case of Carrera, who was an enigma beyond solution—is at least equal to that of their neighbours. I have not time to dwell on this subject, but I will add, for the comfort of tender souls still oppressed with horrid memories of San Domingo and Cawnpore, that the revolution which will restore the Indian race to independence and power, will probably be peaceful, and certainly will bear no stain of guiltless blood. The semi-civilised Indians of America are pre-eminently trustworthy.

We strolled up the broad, sandy street of the village, bordered by the fence of each little enclosure, until reaching the grassy square before the church, which is an universal feature of Indian settlements, however small they may be. Scarcely a soul was abroad, even in that early hour of the evening, except a drunken priest, who glared at us; but that sight is too common in Spanish America to call for notice. Big dogs rushed out barking at the sound of our heavy boots. Old women, slowly gossiping at their doorways, looked up and returned our greeting listlessly. At the church—a tiny building of mud, roofed with red tiles, and guarded on either side the porch by an ancient idol, open-eyed, open-mouthed, terrible to look upon, the very stones to which

...ound great arms sh
rectangular growth, changed
parallel to the main trunk. W
fence protected, and found ours
the ground was swampy, and flag
thicket. The moon was just risi
trate the arch of boughs above u
and had the village not been so
enter that sinister-looking pit.

"A likely spot for an old tiger,
and stiff muscles and a dainty p
much less nice to eat than little wh

"There was only one tiger ever t
I've heard of," answered A. "He
the next. But they're not likely to f

"Did he do much mischief?"

"It's a strange story. I'll tell you
me. Here is the spot he broke cover
crouching along through the open, lo
That made it so terrible."

"Reached whom?"

"Oh, that's the tale. Recollect th
from which he

tall trees. Across it, and along each side, ran a line or fence of pebbles, which, backed by the superstitious horror environing the place, sufficiently protected the repose of these old heathen bones. There was no other sign to indicate the ancient use of this bare meadow; no statues, as on the isthmus, no great cairns, as on the opposite shore of the lake. The Niguirans, Aztec by race or no, had their own opinion of what constitutes a fitting memento for the dead, and they thought well to leave him here, all unnoticed, in the earth, with his treasures of weapon and ornament and household gear. The ground beneath us, as every soul on Ometepec knows, was filled full with painted vases and bowls and carven metlatés, or boards of stone for grinding maize, all infinitely handsomer and better made than any this country now can manufacture. Many other treasures lie there. Necklaces of stone beads or chalcedony, marvellous in their minute workmanship; rattles and drops of gold; great urns full of strange implements. But the cemeteries, when known or recognised, are seldom disturbed. So vast was the early population of this island, that a hole can scarcely be dug in any part of it without discovering at least one perfect article of pottery or stone; and in no quarter of Nicaragua can a man scratch the soil to a depth of six inches, whether in forest or savannah or city street, without turning up fragments, more or less perfect, of antique vessels. It is therefore quite unnecessary for the modern Indians to disturb their ancestors' bones. The only object they could have in so doing would be to appropriate the treasures of household furniture always to be found there; for it has long since been discovered by these practical archæologists that it does not pay, on the whole, to seek for gold in their ancestors' graves. Not that ornaments, and even large plates of that metal, are not occasionally found; but such chances are too rare and too utterly matters of luck to entice the stolid Indian from his cornfield and his tobacco. And pots and pans are to be found in his own back garden most likely; if not, in the nearest bit of waste ground. Why they

were there deposited, when, and by whom, he knows not; nor do we. That most of the "caches" are not funereal he is convinced, and experience seems to support his opinion. Therefore, the great cemeteries of the islands are mostly left alone, unless when some foreigner comes, with dollars and much energy, to unearth the mouldering ashes from their big painted urns. Such an one had passed through shortly before, and the marks of his irreverent hand were scattered on the lower slope. The other day I saw some results of his labour in the British Museum.*

Having surveyed this ancient cemetery, we turned to go back. I spare the reader each single moral which occurred to my mind in looking upon the scene; but I beg him to believe they were of a very superior kind. Morals are out of date; they are now pointed at instead of pointing. And they never did, in my opinion, adorn any tale. Let every man make these things for himself by his own individuality; they are of no value at second hand. I might tell you I shed a tear in thinking of the poor Indian, whose untutored mind saw more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy; but it would not be true. I might say I laughed at sight of all these poor old dead; but I didn't. The fact is, a man must have a mind of double-elegy power to extract sentiment from the view of an unadorned graveyard, made at an unknown date by a people whose very name is matter of question, and filled with bodies of which no man can tell the history. Gray's far-famed reflection here is utterly out of place; but it may be that the Hampden and Cromwell of the period do chance to rest under this sod, undistinguishable from their possible rivals. Here, perhaps, is matter for another moral; but Hamlet has unfeelingly cut the ground from under us. I yield the point, observing only that the moon shone very stilly, and the little thickets of wild indigo waved very pale and gentle above those ancient ashes.

* The collection of Messrs. Boyle and Jebb, presented to the nation.

We returned to the lake shore; and after supper, while the smoke curled up among the shimmering tufts of Spanish moss which trailed from each bough above our heads, looking far over the glittering lake towards the misty hills of Chontales, I asked my friend A—— for his promised story of the tiger. He collected his thoughts, and began.

"You know I don't approve of filibustering, nor of William Walker. I have no wish to argue the question, because we are all overworked to-night, and I am willing to admit there is much to be said on both sides. Simply, for my own part, I don't approve, nor ever did, of regenerating a country, nor improving a man, by cutting throats. There! don't wriggle in your seat like that, Will, because we're like to have a hard pull to-morrow, and you'd wish to sit easy on the bench. But, though I was dead against Walker, I had many dear friends in his army, men who thought like you, Will, that their cause was holy and their pretext just. Among them was a fine young fellow from one of the Western States, up Nevada way, I think, who was just as noble a boy as ever took up a wrong cause, and sanctified it with his own enthusiasm. He was among the fifty-five who fought at Rivas, where he was wounded badly, and the same ill-luck clung to him all through the war. At last, in one of the skirmishes at La Vergen, he was so hardly cut about by the Costa Ricans, that Walker ordered him over here to recruit; for you must know that on Ometepec was a chief hospital of the filibusters, and the refuge for their women and children.

"It is not needful to go at length into the cause of that sudden hostility the Indians of this island showed before their visitors had been long among them. More and more bitter the dislike grew against the arrogant filibusters, till at length, yielding to a fit of stolid madness, such as affects the race not infrequently, the Indians came down from Pueblo Grande, and murdered every man of them in his bed. It was a terrible scene. The natives went to their work in cold blood, as to a just execution, and the

filibusters, wounded and helpless as they were, made a desperate stand. Before that hospital was carried, half the Indians were down, but there were hundreds more behind, and the garrison had few serviceable arms and less ammunition. So at length they all fell, but amply avenged.

"Scot was among the last surviving. So young he was, and so brave and handsome, that the Indian women, who had followed their husbands to fight, cried out to spare his life. The men round about seemed to hesitate, and lowered their blood-stained knives. Then a peon, called Ramon Selva, a handsome but fanatical Indian, cried out aloud, 'God has not spared this heretic's soul, and shall we have mercy on his body?' He passed behind, and with one blow clove his skull to the brain. In doing so, putting all his weight into the stroke, the murderer's foot slipped, and he fell with considerable force, spraining his ankle. No one helped him to rise, for the Indians had been moved to spare that boy, and few approved of Ramon's deed; a silence followed it; and when at length he staggered to his feet and tried to crawl away, they offered him aid without speaking. But his wife and two brothers were among the crowd, and these took him to a neighbouring hut, where he might escape notice. And in the evening they slung him in a hammock, and set off, five men and three women, for Pueblo Grande.

"It was towards evening, as I said, but the sun was still up, and the light strong upon that stony ground above the dell I showed you to-night. They passed through the bit of swamp, thinking of no danger, but silent. Ramon groaned a good deal, whether with pain or remorse no man can say. They climbed the bank, as we did a short while since, and began to cross the open; two men carrying Ramon in the front, and the rest following. Suddenly one of the women shrieked. All turned at that startling cry, and glanced along the path they had lately come.

"Just climbing from the dell, his head and shoulders already clear, was a tiger, and one of the largest. While they looked with

eyes full of terror, the great beast drew himself out and came trotting towards them, his head down-pressed and crouching, and his lips twisted back in a hideous grin. The women shrieked, and ran, and came again, wild with terror. The men drew their machetes, but with hands that trembled too violently for good service. The jaguar is a terrible foe to a man, ay, or to twenty men, well-armed and with good consciences; but these Indians had only swords, and a superstitious remorse oppressed them. So, when he was distant fifty yards or so, trotting along without regarding the clamour of the women or the loud shouts of the men, one of the latter yielded to his panic and fled away. All the others followed then, running for their lives across the meadow, leaving Ramon Selva upon the ground. The tiger paid no attention to the fugitives, but ran, swift and deadly, to the hammock. Ramon was struggling to his feet, and screaming for help. With a short roar, the mighty beast sprang upon him, bounding down as an eagle swoops, crushing his skull as, ten hours before, he had cloven the skull of that poor boy. Then the tiger lifted him by the shoulder and galloped off with him towards the lava fields, where his trail was lost. And no man ever saw trace of Ramon Selva since.

"That was the only time I have heard of a tiger near this village, but there are great quantities in the island; and black ones also."

"It was a case of swift retribution," I said; "but the attacks of wild beasts are not, perhaps, so haphazard as most people suppose. A tiger always singles out a victim before leaving his ambush, and although he may strike others down, either because they get in his way, or, more rarely, from an impulse of mischief, he will always secure the prey first chosen."

"That's true enough," answered A., "and Manuele there can give you a curious example of a jaguar's pertinacity in following up his first idea. Tell us the story of that black tiger which besieged you on Zapatero, peon."

Without pressing, the Indian began, and told us the following

story, which shows even more strongly than any I ever heard the incredible courage, patience, and ingenuity of the black jaguar, an animal dreaded even more thoroughly than his spotted brother. The scene Manuele described we ourselves beheld a few days afterwards, and as an introduction to his tale I will paint its locale as well as I can.

The island of Zapatero, like most others on the lake of Nicaragua, is a volcano, now extinct, but once, apparently, of great violence and power. In former times there was a considerable population on the island, which is indeed as capable of cultivation, and as well adapted for man's abode, as its sister mountain Ometepec, or any other of the fertile islands that dot the lake; but at present, or at least in the time of our visit, the sole inhabitants of Zapatero were two half-wild vaqueros, whose duty it was to look after the cattle herds which roamed at their own will about the island, subject of course to the fancy of the pumas and jaguars. The dwelling of these men was as rough and strong as themselves, built almost wholly of timber, and covered with a very thick thatching of grass. The reason of these extra precautions was evident at the moment of our visit, for the wind was blowing a very typhoon, round and across the shore on which the little building stood. Compassing it about was a close wood of acacia bushes, of a man's height, and bearing long crooked thorns at every leaf. Beyond this belt of graceful torments, which is a common feature of the lake shore, was a broad meadow of nature's clearing, dotted over with groups of fine cattle and horses and mules. When we saw them, they were huddled together in bodies of two or three score each, their heads in the centre, and their tails exposed to the blast. Terrific was that wind. It blew all the acacias into each other's arms, and knotted and twisted their thorny limbs together as a torn sail is twisted up in a hurricane. We took shelter in the vaqueros' hut, and Manuele, seeing me stare about with some interest, observed: "This is the very hut in which my adventure took place, señor, and there are

the marks of the tiger's claws," pointing to some deep scores and scrapings in the door.

"There was a compadre of mine, vaquero on Zapatero," the peon began, "some four or five years ago. His companion was taken ill with calentura of a very bad type, and was obliged to leave the island. Joachin, knowing I was on Ometepec, sent for me to take the sick man's place for awhile; and I, finding the pay very good, and the work such as I liked, got into the canoe and skimmed across. Six months I lived on the island, and I tell you, señores, no man can say he knows what loneliness is who has not tried cattle-breeding in an uninhabited land. I have sat in the doorway of that hut when Joachin was away, for days at a time; I have sat and looked over the meadow, which is always grey and never green; I have dozed with open eyes until my ears grew full of phantom voices, and strange, uncertain shapes began to move about the plain. Joachin's odd ways made me laugh when I first came to the place, but he said to me, 'Wait till you have been here a month, you will be strange as I.' And he was right. Before my time was up, I began to talk out loud to myself, whether alone or not, like Joachin. I talked to things, and to the cattle, but said scarcely a word to my old friend, even when we were together. And somehow, towards the last, I began to like the eternal silence and the grey monotony of a life which took its colour from the grey world without. Yes, señores, it may seem strange, but I often look back with pleasure on that hermit-time in Zapatero. But my story does not advance.

"One night, after I had been six months on the island, I was seated by the fire, talking confidentially to the plantains that were boiling in a pot. Joachin was not in the hut, and I was expecting him home to supper. Suddenly I heard his shout outside, and the next instant he dashed in, banged the door to, and threw the heavy bar across it. Just as he fixed it, and, panting, leaned his shoulder against the stout wood as an additional support, a shock, so heavy that the whole hut quivered, made the door bend.

Another followed; then all was still. I had sprung up at first sight of Joachin, but the scene passed so quickly that no word had been spoken as yet. But when, after the second blow on the door, the attempt seemed to be abandoned on that side, I took my compadre by the shoulder and shook him, for he seemed wild with fear. 'Gran Dios, man!' I said; 'what is this?' His appearance was ghastly. The old Guatemala jacket he wore, his leather breeches, even his boots of alligator hide, were ripped and cut with the thorns of the acacias. His livid face streamed with black blood from many deep scratches, and perspiration drenched his long, ragged hair. 'A black tiger!' he whispered; 'it has chased me across the savannah, for my horse was tired out. It is after *me!* Oh, listen!' Then, in the deathly silence, while we held our breath and Joachin strained my hand backwards and forwards, I heard the hard snoring of a tiger just outside the door. No doubt of it! The beast had singled Joachin out, and let the horse go free. While we listened, the direction of the sound moved about, now up and now down, accompanied by gentle pats upon the door, as if the animal was resting his velvet paws against it as he reared himself on hind legs. At length we heard the sound of scratching, and I drew my machete. In a few seconds, a black paw, armed with terrible, crooked claws, was seen working on our side the door. I gave a downright cut which nearly severed it, and the animal, roaring like savage thunder, threw himself against the wood, again and again, in rage. Then, another pause followed, and we stood holding each other by the arm. Very soon, a noise upon the roof showed, as we had expected, that the enemy was directing his attack to that direction, and I got my old gun ready. As soon as I saw fur, I fired, and wounded him, no doubt, for he rolled from the roof, and we heard him fall heavily. But, again and again, he returned to the attempt, and, every time I caught a glimpse of his black and shining skin, I fired. His roaring was terrible to hear, and Joachin, who never had courage to spare, sat

on the floor in a corner, striving to close his ears to the sound. All night long the struggle lasted, and every crack of the hut was tried by this untiring foe. He dashed upon the door, he bounded about the roof, scratching the thatch away, but ever disturbed by my fire; he tried the walls and the door again and again. It was an awful night, señores, that's the fact.

"With the dawn the tiger's efforts became fainter, and at length ceased wholly. When the sun rose, I took my spears and sallied out to meet the creature in fair fight. I followed his trail for a mile or more, easily guided by the clouts of blood which stained the grass and rocks. He was wounded to the death, I saw plainly. And, at last, I found him, stone dead, beside the body of Joachin's horse, which he must have destroyed in the very last effort of his rage, dying in the act.

"After that adventure, my compadre and I both left Zapatero, finding it a residence too exciting for us. We could not sleep in the hut; but I should not object to return to the old lonely life there when you have done with me, señores."

THE CAREER AND CHARACTER OF RAJAH BROOKE.

IT is no easy task to gather up our recollections, to write our personal impressions of a great man whom one has known, and who has but just passed away (1868). Inconsequential memories surge to the brain, and must be repressed; enthusiasm fain would blind us; regard and affectionate devotion struggle with our wish to speak impartially. And in the case of Rajah Brooke these difficulties are yet further enhanced by the crowd of private interests and personal feelings which surrounded his position. I would pain the sympathies of none in that brave little band of our countrymen who ruled Sarawak under the late sovereign, and now serve the new; and yet I would speak of the rajah plainly as I knew him, not slurring over his faults; for the further reason that those faults were so few. Not wildly eulogising his character, although the enthusiasm which his contact roused in my boyish days has never quite been overcome. I would give a true and dispassionate report, such as one may draw who knew him in his Eastern home, and loved him, but was not blind.

As in the case of many historical personages of the last generation, there is considerable uncertainty as to the time and place of Rajah Brooke's birth. The date is fixed by some at the 24th of April, 1803; by others at the 29th. But I remember very well indeed drinking his health on board the *Rainbow* in the month of August, and on a day which he himself announced to us as his sixtieth birthday. Running back along my log-book, I make this

date to be either the 24th or 25th of August, 1863. The place is yet more uncertain, for at least I can give the rajah's personal opinion about the date. Some claim Bandel in Bengal as his place of birth; and this I believe to be true. But others give the honour to Combe Grove, near Bath, where his parents lived for some time. Of the rajah's boyish days I have nothing to tell. He was educated at Norwich Grammar School, but had not time to acquire very great learning there, entering the army at fourteen years of age. The extraordinary store of erudition he had in after years was all gathered in mature life.

He served with distinction in the first Burmese war, where he gained an intimate companion, which was true to him for the remainder of life—a heavy companion, but firm—a two-ounce bullet in his body. The retirement of Rajah Brooke from the service was owing to an accident; he overstayed his furlough, and was superseded. His father died about this time, leaving an unencumbered fortune of thirty thousand pounds, and thereupon Mr. Brooke purchased the *Royalist* schooner, and embarked on his adventurous career. After much cruising in peaceful and well-known waters, he finally set sail for the Farther East on the 27th of October, 1838, and, in July, 1839, he reached Singapore.

It was on the 14th of August, 1839, that the future rajah first beheld his territory. The current story, doubtless spread in all good faith by some enthusiastic admirer, gives Sir James Brooke credit for a design upon Sarawak while yet in England, and connects each incident of his voyage, the long stay in Celebes, the unwearied study of Malay, and all other details, with this ambition; but both in public and in private the rajah has denied any such intention. I remember standing once beside him on the elevated terrace of Government House, when he said, looking across the river at the busy "Chinese campong," "Twenty-five years ago I regarded this scene with but the same curiosity as you feel now. Who knows? perhaps twenty-five years hence you may look on it with as deep an interest as I at this

moment!" And in his speech at the London Tavern in 1852 the rajah took occasion to observe: "It has been said that when I set sail for the shores of Borneo I carried a deep design in my bosom to suppress piracy, and to carry civilisation to the Malayan race. This is most flattering to my wisdom and foresight, but unfortunately it is not true. I had but one definite object when I left England, and that was, to see something of the world and to come back again." One does not care wantonly to overthrow one pillar which supports a doubtful reputation; but Rajah Brooke will only stand the firmer when all aid of exaggeration or credulity is stripped from his fame.

I do not design to give more than a sketch of the rajah's political career. If we believe native opinion, the Malay viceroy, Mudah Hassim, conceived the idea of ceding his territory at their very first meeting; but this seems too precipitate. However it be, he suffered Mr. Brooke to make a short voyage to the interior, and to set sail again for Singapore in the following September, without broaching the subject to him. Much conversation passed upon the chances of trade, and Mr. Brooke seems to have been struck with the governor's eagerness in this matter; but, with that caution which lay at the root of his sanguine character, he answered only in generalities.

For six months the *Royalist* cruised along the coast of Celebes, and on the 29th of August, 1840, Mr. Brooke returned to Sarawak. To understand, in any measure, the motives of Mudah Hassim's subsequent conduct, a very slight review of the internal affairs of the Bruni empire, of which Sarawak at that time formed part, is necessary. The island of Borneo was divided between three powers, the Dutch in the south, the Sultan of Sambas in the west, and the Sultan of Bruni to the north and east. Sambas was merely a nominal State under Dutch "protection;" but cruel as was, and is, that government, it was still so far superior to the Bruni system that the people of Sarawak, lying on the eastern frontier of Sambas, were painfully anxious for annexation. The

northern sultan was naturally opposed to this desire, and at the time of Mr. Brooke's arrival a war was raging in the interior between the rebels and the Bruni troops. So important the crisis was deemed, that the Pangaran Makota, governor of Sarawak, was temporarily superseded by an official of no less dignity than Mudah Hassim, the uncle of the sultan, and prime minister of the empire. But this general failed to achieve greater success than the deposed Makota, and Mr. Brooke's arrival in the *Royalist* was a real god-send to the Malay government. Straightway Mudah Hassim caused rumours to circulate that the stranger was an envoy from England, and his yacht was magnified into a three-decker, come to overawe the rebels. Such a report had great success for awhile; but when it reached Mr. Brooke's ears how his name and presence were misrepresented by the astute viceroy, he instantly prepared to leave. This resolution—and none could doubt the inflexibility of the future rajah's will who had once looked in his face—reduced Mudah Hassim to despair. He prayed abjectly for a little longer use of the Englishman's prestige, and at length, whether on impulse or after long consideration, offered to Mr. Brooke the viceroyalty of Sarawak, at a yearly tribute close upon five hundred pounds. This was in November, 1840. Neither accepting nor declining the proposal, the owner of the *Royalist* proceeded up the river with twelve sailors, and *instantly* suppressed a revolt which had defied the sultan's power for four years. After which he returned to Kuching, as the capital of Sarawak is termed, and opened negotiations with Mudah Hassim, who, apparently, began to think he had been precipitate.

On the 14th of February, 1841, Mr. Brooke sailed for Singapore, loaded a vessel with English goods, and returned to Kuching in April. The cargo was unladed under the viceroy's guarantee, and Mr. Brooke waited patiently until August for the cargo of antimony promised in repayment. Mudah Hassim and the Malay chiefs grew daily more arrogant in their manners, and

the ore came so slowly as to show no good-will on their part. Becoming bolder with time, they organised a fleet of piratical Dyaks, to punish, as they said, the former rebels, and openly paraded it in the Sarawak river, under Mr. Brooke's eyes. Makota attempted to poison him with arsenic, Mudah Hassim refused to pay the value of the goods received, and the Pangarans, as are entitled the Malay princes, established a blockade of the *Royalist*. Under these insults Mr. Brooke was driven to bay. He loaded the vessel's guns with grape, brought her broadside to bear upon the viceroy's dwelling, and then proceeded, amidst the acclamations of all the lower class, to present his ultimatum to Mudah Hassim. Not more than twenty men supported the viceroy, and, under these circumstances, the promised deed of cession was drawn up, sealed, and delivered on the 24th of September, 1841. And not an honest man throughout the province but rejoiced to hear the news. That cargo of antimony, however, remains a debt to this day.

I have been thus lengthy in describing the origin of Mr. Brooke's raj, because no point in his career is so little understood in England. "How did he come to be rajah?" is a question constantly asked of all those who are supposed to know anything of Sarawak. And very few indeed are aware that the government is held as a sort of feudal dependency of Bruni, independent indeed, in its internal affairs, by the deed of cession, and practically beyond the sovereign's control in every respect, but charged with a yearly tribute of two thousand dollars for Sarawak proper, three thousand dollars for the territory of Muka, and as much for Bintulu; a conquest made in 1860, under circumstances much resembling those of Sarawak in 1839.

From 1841 to 1847 Mr. Brooke was incessantly occupied with the suppression of piracy and the internal reforms of his new sovereignty. He visited Bruni in 1842, and there released numerous captives. In 1843 he took a first cruise in H.M.S. *Dido*, and harried the pirates from Malludu to Seribas. In 1844,

at Bruni, he obtained the cession of Labuan to the British Crown, and, in 1846, the formal ceremonies were performed, and the Union Jack hoisted on that important island, the possession of which we owe entirely to Rajah Brooke. The year 1845 was occupied in punishing the Illanun, Sakarran, and Seribas pirates. In 1846 Mr. Brooke accompanied the fleet which exacted reparation from the Sultan for the massacre of his relatives and nobles belonging to the "English party," amongst whom was now numbered that Mudah Hassim who had once been Brooke's bitterest foe. The Sultan declined redress, and defended his capital. In the assault that followed, Mr. Brooke was wounded for the seventh time. In June, 1847, he assisted, on board the *Nemesis*, at the most important action which had yet taken place with the pirates of Balanini, and, while yet the laurels of this victory were green, he set sail for England, after an absence of nine years. At home the rajah was lionised almost to the measure of his deserts: the Queen received him at Windsor, made him K.C.B., and appointed him Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Labuan, with unusual powers; London presented him with the freedom of the City; Oxford granted him an LL.D.; and the outside public gave him a subscription dinner whenever they could catch him. But all the honours that civilisation could pay —though no man valued such recognition more highly—could not detain Rajah Brooke from the care of his little sovereignty. In 1848 he returned to the East, and entered on his duties at Labuan. As his own strong sense had feared, order in Sarawak suffered in its rajah's absence; the pirates raised their heads, and the Malay Pangarans intrigued in every direction against the new order of things. 1849 was a busy year; from Labuan to Sarawak, from Sarawak to Sulu, from Sulu back to Labuan, Rajah Brooke hurried, fighting pirates, releasing captives, threatening sultans, and making treaties; always at work in that great object of restoring peace to the lovely Eastern seas. In England he was attacked before Parliament and before the public; Mr. Hume

accused the relentless foe of piracy of being himself "a pirate and a successful buccaneer." Mr. Wise published his opinion that Sir James Brooke's proceedings were unjustifiable on the ground of justice and humanity, unwise, impolitic, and mischievous, but not more inconsistent with his previous professions as a Christian philanthropist than," &c. And the result of many intrigues and much personal hatred was the final removal of Sir James Brooke from the government of Labuan. In 1850 he was appointed envoy to Siam; in May, 1851, the violent and unceasing clamour of Messrs. Cobden, Hume, and Sidney Herbert compelled his return to England, where he was fêted and denounced alternately, lauded to the sky as our Christian champion, or bitterly rebuked as a bloodthirsty filibuster, according to the knowledge or ignorance of every speaker. The storm lasted long; but Rajah Brooke maintained his courage and kept his temper until April of 1853, when he returned to the country he had saved, where every honest soul worshipped him. Here, after recovering from a fearful attack of small-pox, he dwelt in peace till the great Chinese insurrection of 1857—an event curious in itself, and very characteristic of the three nationalities engaged—the Chinese, Malay, and Dyak. After the suppression of this senseless revolt, which was, however, a terrible blow to the young state, things went well until 1860, when a vast conspiracy of the Malay nobility, the old pirates of Seribas, and the Kyan tribe called Kennowits, broke out prematurely in the murder of Messrs. Fox and Steele by the latter. Owing to the interference of the Hon. Mr. Edwards, Governor of Labuan, this wide-reaching revolt was not quelled until the following year; but its final result was advantageous to the rajah, gaining for him the further cession of two large provinces, Muka and Bintulu, from the Sultan. At the end of 1862 an unfortunate disagreement with his elder nephew, Captain Brooke, in the internal affairs of Sarawak, recalled the rajah hastily from England, but his presence restored instant order. Eighteen sixty-three brought with it the most perilous

expedition in which Sir James Brooke's forces had yet engaged, that against the Kyans, a warlike and numerous people inhabiting the far interior. This was successfully carried through by the Tuan Mudah, Mr. C. Johnson-Brooke, and the subordinate officers of the Government, and in September of the same year the aged rajah bade a last farewell to the land he had so nobly won.

In describing the person of Sir James Brooke and his character —so far as a daily intercourse of some months could enable one to understand it—I cannot be accused of breaking the canons of good taste. Such men as he belong to history. Not lightly is the smallest detail of their appearance or of their nature to be regarded, for future ages will read with interest of the one, and will weigh the other with profit. Of faults, every great character has its share, perhaps in a larger ratio than the common clay, but very few have been those to whom so little of small human weakness could be charged as to the Rajah of Sarawak.

His was not the stature of a demi-god, nor the stately presence of the ancient heroes. His height was scarcely five feet nine, his figure, though wiry and muscular beyond the common, was slender in its proportions. The well-known portrait of Sir Francis Grant gives, perhaps, a fair likeness of the rajah in his youth; but with advancing years the lines of strength around the jaw, the keen resolution in the eyes, grew yet more apparent. Handsome he was, with that manlike and imposing beauty which strikes men and women alike, but not handsome by regularity of feature. His mouth seemed cut in stone, and his eyes—pleasantly though they shone when he presided at those charming dinners at Government House, faced by the Tuan Mudah (C. Johnson-Brooke), and surrounded by an ever-changing circle of out-station officers, whose home, in their rare visits to the capital, was always at the rajah's house—never seemed wholly to lose that stern and steady gaze acquired in looking upon scenes of red-handed justice and retribution. But he was the pleasantest companion in the world, this "successful buccaneer," as Mr. Hume called him—this kindly

gentleman, as those who saw and knew entitled him. Genial always, whatever the age or class of his companion; equally at home with a rude Dyak or with the belle of the season. None were afraid of him. His learning was most extensive, his readiness of wit and power of expression equally delightful. The eloquence of Rajah Brooke in public I need not dwell upon; many heard him in England, and to those who had not that pleasure, I can only declare that very few of our orators reached his level, and scarce any surpassed it. The sole quality in regard to conversation which the rajah lacked was the sense of humour, of which indeed he had but little. Yet a paradox boldly enunciated was a favourite form of thought with him, as when he said one evening: "If the life of any man in the world has been a series of lucky chances, mine has been so. My wound in India was luck; my retirement from the army was luck; my cruise in the *Royalist* was luck; the rebellion here, the helplessness of Mudah Hassim, the insolence of the Pangarans, the murderous attempt of Makota, the massacre of the Bruni nobles, and my whole career in Sarawak, has been a chain of luck. But I don't believe in any such thing!"

It may be that, when young, Rajah Brooke indulged in the follies common to men of great energy; but his Eastern life was passed, from the very outset to its end, without suspicion of a stain. And this fact gave him the greater influence among a people so sensual, so utterly unconscious of morality, as is the Malay. The chaste Dyaks looked with enthusiastic approbation at the household of their sovereign, governed, for the first time in Sarawak history, by one who seized no man's goods, nor carried off his daughters; and they often pointed out to Malay visitors, I fear with little effect, how nobly their own favourite monarch set the example of decency and order.

Of that usual religion which one may term superstitious, the rajah, like most, if not all, of strong and energetic natures, had but little. His pure life, his unflinching pursuit of duty, were the

result of no dogmatic injunctions blindly and with trembling accepted, but the logical conclusion of thought and observation. The origin of dogmatic creeds, and the result of them, was a favourite subject with his mind; nor was there any speculation so preposterous but he would give it a few moments of attention, overthrowing it with gentle and logical ridicule, or gravely demonstrating its inconsistency. Almost the only occasions on which I have seen the rajah heartily laugh were in listening to the ingenious sophistries of a young visitor who made his appearance in Sarawak some years ago, and who seemed specially to occupy a fanciful mind in devising new and more monstrous systems of heresy day by day for the entertainment of his host and himself. He hated, above all things, priestcraft. The surrender of intellect, the admission that another person could possibly, by virtue of any circumstance outside of his own merits, stand on a level above the common humanity, is to such men as he an intolerable idea. And in this connection it would be pushing to an unreasonable point the doctrine of privacy to avoid all mention of the Sarawak church and its officers. It has been regretted that men so upright and conscientious as were the Rajah of Sarawak and the Bishop of Labuan could not have dwelt together upon terms of greater friendship; but I feel convinced that Dr. McDougal, whatever his small failings, was better adapted for the delicate position he held than nine in ten among the clergy of England, as they now are, who might have aspired to his see. Each respected the other, if he had no liking; but the ordinary parson—such an one, for instance, as he who wrote to the powerful chief of Lundu that all his ancestors were now raging in hell for the sin of taking human heads in the time of their barbarism!—would have outraged the whole population to madness, Chinese, Malay, and Dyak *en masse*. Such cruel and senseless orthodoxy Dr. McDougal was too wise to entertain, or too prudent to exhibit; and if it be true that Mr. Chambers of Banting has accepted the post the former has resigned, we may congratulate Mr. Charles Johnson-Brooke, now

rajah, upon the appointment of a bishop who will pursue the wise policy of conciliation introduced by his predecessor, without the unfortunate weaknesses which, in some measure, impaired Dr. McDougal's efficiency.

Of Sir James Brooke's personal courage it is not necessary to speak; but to this quality he added a skill in the use of all weapons, and a quickness of eye and limb which were quite extraordinary. To the moment when paralysis struck him down for the time, the rajah had few equals in that rapid and vigorous fence which is really of service in a struggle, nor in real pistol-play. There are many men, it is likely, who could cut the pips of a card more accurately, but I never saw one who was the rajah's match in firing all round, in front, in rear, running, or wheeling about. That most treacherous weapon, the revolver, was sure as a duelling pistol in his hands. When the Chinese rebels came down to Kuching on the night of February 18, 1857, their first object was to surround Government House, with the intention of killing the sovereign. They knew that he and his body-servant were alone in the building, for it was not customary before this event to post any sentinels either by night or day. The Chinese force was over three thousand, and the half of this number marched in silence through the darkness to the attack. They fired the building, and stood in wait for their victim, yelling and wasting their powder after the usual Chinese manner. Half of them were drunk; all were thirsting for the rajah's blood. But so terrible was the prestige surrounding him, so deeply founded the belief in his miraculous skill, that when the object of their hatred sprang through a window from the blazing house, with a pistol in each hand and a sabre between his teeth, the fifteen hundred burly Chinamen shrank from his desperate path, and, without a wound, he dashed through a living lane of intended murderers. He reached the stream that fenced the Residence gardens, pursued by the cowardly host, plunged in, dived beneath the sampans lying there, and rose among the bushes on the

farther bank. But as he rose, another peril loomed over him, for a dark figure stooped above his hiding-place, and eager eyes were examining the water. One hasty glance assured the rajah that this new foe was all alone; he sprang in one tremendous bound at the bent throat, and shortened his sabre to finish the work. But a strangled voice gurgled forth—"It's I, sir—Penty, sir! Oh! for God's sake, Sir James!" The rajah was fond of telling this story, and Penty, his steward, a stalwart west countryman, always grinned from ear to ear in listening to it, and invariably wound up the finale with an inconsequential "Yes, sir!"

The Dyaks also, among whom wrestling is a favourite pastime, had a notion that their rajah was more than a match for their most skilful champions. Whether there was any ground for this idea, or how it came to be accredited, I cannot tell; most surely Sir James Brooke had never entered the lists with their naked warriors. It may be that in some early struggle, when the leader of the Sarawak forces had to take hand-to-hand part in every action, the Dyaks saw him successfully disarm an antagonist by this means, and thence the opinion spread. One evening, shortly after the Kyan war was ended, Mr. Stuart Johnson, third and youngest of the rajah's nephews who have joined his fortunes, brought down a guest to Government House, in the person of "Joke," a Kennowit chieftain of great importance somewhere on the Rejang river. This warrior, who had much distinguished himself in the late campaign, was very short, but immensely powerful, and a noted champion at all weapons and all games. Mr. Stuart Johnson and Mr. Cruikshank, residents of Kennowit, each tried a fall with him, but he threw them easily. The rajah happened to enter the room just as I asked Joke whether there was any Englishman in the country who could match him with the sword or in wrestling. "No one but the rajah," he said, looking at his sovereign with a curious expression of mingled worship and curiosity in his small shifting eyes. "Why, I am old and very thin, Joke!" said Sir James, smiling. "So is the ratan, rajah!"

answered the Kennowit, quick as thought. An extreme readiness of comparison and allegory is characteristic of all Oriental peoples.

The rajah's temper was always under control, aud he did nothing upon impulse. Perhaps this was not so in his youth; but endless responsibilities, disappointments innumerable, and the habit of danger, had brought his mind to the calm equanimity of age long before the years began to weigh heavily. Two recollections only, so far as I observed, roused anger in his breast. The conduct of England upon several occasions he sometimes denounced with just indignation; but that is not precisely what I mean. One of the stories which never failed to bring the light of passion into his stern eyes was the massacre of Bruni in 1846, when the cowardly sultan murdered those six Pangarans, uncles of his own, who favoured Rajah Brooke and the English alliance. They died with a heroism befitting their cause; two, at least, blowing up their houses, their hareems and families, when resistance grew hopeless. One of them was that Mudah Hassim who had put Sir James on the throne of Sarawak. The other occasion was at a dinner party in the bishop's house, when conversation had turned upon the qualities of the British sailor. Dr. McDougal, as became his office, loudly claimed for our tars all those virtues which Mr. T. P. Cooke assumed to be their invariable attribute; others ridiculed this egotism of nationality. The rajah then told a story which fixed itself very deeply in my recollection. The incident happened in one of those forays which he undertook in English vessels of war—I think to Sulu, but my memory of the time and place is, I confess, not very accurate. At least there must be many officers now living who can, if they will, recall the circumstance. The piratical village attacked was strongly fortified, and, in especial, an enormous boom had been laid across the entrance of the bay. This obstruction was found to be most difficult of removal, and while the boats of the expedition hacked and sawed at the timber, they were exposed to a murderous fire from batteries planted in judicious spots. Men fell

very thickly, and the force was almost demoralised by its helplessness and loss, when the boom suddenly broke. With mad shouts of vengeance our sailors dashed to shore, but the pirates, after one parting volley, fled through the woods to another position. Rajah Brooke, leading the men in pursuit, looked into a hut, and saw there two very little children abandoned by their parents. Knowing the humour of the sailors, and having very little faith in the T. P. Cooke theory, he detached two men who were considered trustworthy to protect the helpless little pirates. He personally saw them take their post; then followed the attacking force. But when the victors returned, the guards were gone, and the children lay dead upon the floor, with their necks nearly severed. There was an inquiry, of course, but the criminal could not be discovered; the men in charge had deserted their post, leaving the poor little children in safety, as they declared. There were no auxiliaries of any kind at hand. The matter was hushed up. I do not hesitate to repeat this story, because there must be many still alive who can give the place and date I have forgotten.

On the rajah's defects we may touch very lightly. A certain want of softness there was in his nature; a certain self-confidence, which, most justly founded as it was, caused him to feel a polite but profound indifference for the opinion of other persons. One cannot but own also, with all the enthusiastic devotion which we who knew him felt for him, that he exhibited sometimes that last weakness of a noble mind, jealousy of others' success in the objects which his ambition sought—not the small and mean envy which weaker natures often show, but, as I understand, a grander feeling. For rank and wealth and success in life he had a careless indifference too deep for expression; but in the great work of civilising the Farther East, Sir James Brooke would have wished, I think, that the forms of Imperial Rome could be restored, and each great act in that direction be performed under his "numen." But he was aware of this weakness, as of all others in his character, and guarded himself strictly against it. No ruler was more

carefully just to the merits of his subordinates, and he brought out the services of any distinguished officer with scrupulous self-denial. After all, the view was just, that the Oriental seas owed all to Sarawak and its rajah. He first, by untiring energy of sword and tongue and pen, brought before the shocked comprehension of Europe the atrocities daily perpetrated in the Malayan seas. He showed an incredulous world that the piratical fleets of Sulu, Balanini, Illanun, Seribas, and countless others, were not merely legends of the profession, like flying Dutchmen and Krakens and great sea-serpents, but actual realities under which the eastern coasts and waters were suffering to-day, yet more horribly than we ten centuries ago. It was with amazement that England read the dispassionate figures of Rajah Brooke, which estimated the number of pirates who annually swept the shore of *Borneo alone* at fifty thousand men; and could he but have put before the public the story of one day's employment with these fiends, the murders committed for murder's sake, the rapes, the burnings, the ruin, every outrage deepened by slow and ingenious torture, without pretext or object, all Europe would have thrilled with such horror and astonishment as never yet the tale of any crime has roused. And because he made these things partially known, and put his whole fortune, his energy, his life itself, at the work of redressing these terrible things, therefore I hold that Rajah Brooke might justly claim some credit in each action that had his object at heart. But there was a certain grim levity about his manner of speaking on these matters, which, however, showed to the observant mind how very deep his purpose lay at heart; as when he excused his severity against the Seribas pirates by declaring that, "as a gentleman, he could not allow such goings on upon his property."

He was not forgiving by nature, but certainly not revengeful. "The sole enemy I own," he said to me one day, "is the Earl of ———, whom I once mistook for a waiter, and requested to get me an ice. I have never forgiven his parents and himself for this

atrocious carelessness." In his whole career there was but one injustice which roused his heart to bitterness. He was too logical not to comprehend, and, in comprehending, to overlook, that mental deformity which gradually led such men as Mr. Hume and Mr. Cobden to change a political investigation—right in itself, and perhaps not unneedful—into a rancorous persecution; but he could not forgive the studied inconsistency of our foreign secretary (Earl Russell, then Lord John). It was a subject rarely mentioned at Government House, the refusal of England to recognise or protect the little state; for we were all apt to grow warm upon the topic, and any extraneous heat is superfluous under the Equator. But the conduct of Earl Russell here, as in so many other instances, was most irritating. "England recognises my flag," said the rajah, while the rare flush of indignation rose to his face; "by order of the foreign secretary himself, the fleet here have acknowledged it;* by permission of the Admiralty English vessels of war pay me the royal salute, twenty-one guns; English vessels of war enter my river, honour my flag, and treat me according to my station. The courts in Singapore recognise me, and every country round about, from Sulu to Sumatra, admits my claims. The English government publicly thanks and rewards my officers, as officers of Sarawak.† But Earl Russell stands firm in a position untenable. He recognises the existence of Sarawak when a fair chance of insolence to me opens before him, not otherwise. But the dispute is over now. Had I not been recalled hither in hot haste last year, this country, the key to the China Seas, would now have been under French protection. The emperor writes me his eagerness to accept, at any terms, the office which Earl Russell will not undertake on his own conditions. Men may say hereafter that I sacrificed my native country in favour of the land of my adoption; my own family denounces

* A cross, half red, half black, on a yellow field, is the Sarawak flag.

† Referring to the honours paid to the captain and officers of the *Rainbow*, for their gallant action with the 'Lanun pirate', May 22, 1862.

me. But I act according to my conscience. I have a higher duty to these poor savages who trust me than to the country of my birth, which has a thousand sons more worthy than I. I tell you that if I thought my stay here could afford a pretext for Dutch aggression, and neither England nor France would aid Sarawak against that atrocious government, I would leave to-morrow, and trust to the education and experience I have given to these natives to rule justly and act with wisdom; anything, France, or Russia, or Bruni again, rather than the Dutch! They have never ceased to threaten this one spot of Malayan ground where a poor man finds justice. The governor of Sambas, at a public dinner, declared his intention of annexing this country, 'as soon as the breath left the filibuster's body.' And at any cost of reputation among the ignorant and fanatical, I will do all the duty I voluntarily undertook—at any price I will protect Sarawak."

This was in 1863. Almost the last letter Sir James Brooke wrote to me contained the words: "You will see that England recognises us at last; I have done now!"

All his duty was finished, and the hero might at length look forward calmly to that sleep which had never been far absent from his pillow. Twenty-eight years of vigilance unceasing, of constant and deadly peril, of anxiety and self-denial, such as few men in this world's history have practised, had done their work. Though brave and resolute still, as in the first dawn of his ambition, Rajah Brooke had been failing for several years. The sacrifices made, the good that was wrought, none can tell except those of us who know this country and its history. Most affecting it is to read the letters written to private friends in the early part of the rajah's career—so sad with hope deferred, so anxious for the future. He never lost courage, but for years it was the courage of a calm and resolute despair. We who knew him seek in vain through the tomes of history to find a life so strange, so chequered, and perhaps, if the rajah's view of his own work be correct, if his foresight was not deceived, so fruitful of result upon the fortunes

of the Farther East. It would lead one far to explain what these views were which the clear sight of one who rarely made mistakes had before his eyes, but it would be well if extracts from his papers could be published to set forth the opinion of our dead hero upon the true policy of Europe towards the Malayan States. His purpose was accomplished so far as his own part in it lay. One province of Bruni, sole survivor now of thirteen powerful empires founded by the Malayan rovers, was preserved from native anarchy and Dutch aggression. The pirates were checked from end to end of the main island, and such more distant tribes as still persevered in their dread pursuit, the Sulus and Illanuns, had been harried again and again with just severity. The lawless habit of centuries is not to be broken in a day, and the great nobles of the Archipelago still make feverish efforts of defiance; but piracy has had its death-blow.

And what shall we say more of him who died on the 11th of June, 1868? I have not deified the man, nor hid those rare and minute blots which marked his character. Had he been other than he was, even in his foibles, Rajah Brooke had never gained the eminence nor the success he reached. With less self-confidence he had not dared to accept the offer of Mudah Hassim; with less sternness of will, he could not have held the cession for a day. Not by parliamentary speeches of indignation, nor by lachrymose protest of mission societies was his object to be gained. Heaven, or chance, or fate, or what power you will, selected the rajah at his birth, and fitted him for the work he undertook. He was great in all things; and if his character did not readily lend itself to love, it earned from all who came within its reach such utter confidence, such enthusiastic devotion, as perhaps the personal contact of no man save the first Napoleon has in these modern days produced. As a hero he lived, as a Christian philosopher he died.

The terms of Sir James Brooke's will I have not yet heard with authority, but Mr. Charles Johnson-Brooke, late Tuan Mudah—

the "Little Charley" of the rajah's early letters—will succeed his uncle in the government of Sarawak. A gentleman more fitted for the post could not be found. Since the retirement of his elder brother, late Rajah Mudah or heir-apparent, Mr. Charles Brooke has been universally regarded as the successor of his uncle; and although the latter, for reasons of state, studiously refused to confer upon any one the legal title of Rajah Mudah, he himself was always used in private conversation to speak of the Tuan Mudah as heir to his eastern kingdom. Under this new rule we may be sure that each wise policy of the late rajah will be carried out as boldly and as prudently as in the former time.

* * * * * * *

1873. This prediction is well fulfilled. In five years of peace the exports of Sarawak have tripled, standing, by my latest advices, at the respectable figure of £1,500,000 per annum, whilst the population of the capital has risen from 18,000 to 37,000 souls.

SAVAGES I HAVE KNOWN.

LET me first make a careful distinction. There are savages of civilisation and savages of real savagery; it is of the latter class I would endeavour to record a few sketchy reminiscences. Many persons, of delicate perceptions and estimable character, feel no scruple—rather a great inward contentment—in applying the epithet "savage" to each and all of their friends who fail to catch the divine excellence of Mr. Rossetti's colour, or the celestial harmonies of Mr. Whistler's Japanese views of Chelsea, or the majolica of the Marchese Ginori, or the views of Comte and Charles Fourier, or, in fact, the merit of any curious craze which chances to meet their own approval. Not that I myself sit in judgment upon any man's hobby, or venture to declare an admiration or an antipathy on any subject of art or philosophy whatsoever. As one who has lived much, travelled far, and seen many lands and several cities, I have learned to respect the ideas of men, and to wonder in silence where I cannot agree; I have learned also—or flatter myself in so thinking—to waive the expression of my views upon a subject which I do not understand; though views a reasonable man *must* have—whether he know much or little, or nothing at all—upon every subject. Therefore, wiser in this respect, as I love to think, than the pastors of the daily press, I will leave in peace the social and artistic barbarians who swarm, as we are told, in this our native land, and tell only my experiences of the real, unquestioned, conscientious savages who have crossed my

wayward path in the odd nooks of this big world which I have girdled.

How the memories come back to me! Memories of laughter and of fear, of downright, honest, side-splitting mirth, of deadly danger, of pleasant "camaraderie;" memories of lonely wood and sunny river: of camp, and hut, and ruin; every recollection intensified and warmed by a flash of glittering eyes, brown limbs, and honest, manly, wondering faces, pleasant to recall. For I strive to dwell upon my savage *friends* only in these retrospective visions. Too much, I think, have we heard of the horrors and ferocity of simple nature—too much, perhaps, do we know; I might tell stories, like another, of the bad men one meets in this land and that, but it is not my wish. Let the recollection of a child's evil habits die with its growth; let us remember only the little one's funny ways—its drolleries and quaint innocence; lest, since the sins of men are writ in brass, while the good "is oft interred with their bones," we come to hate and dread the whole generation of children, because, from ignorance, they are cruel now and then; from ignorance, are treacherous; from ignorance, unteachable. I think it is the devoir of every Christian man to speak lightly and kindly of those who are to him but as the beasts that have no revelation, to guide them with his knowledge. And if, by good or bad fortune, he have wandered much among the darker places of the earth, and have gathered unusual knowledge of those who dwell therein, he should not, for a small self-glory, magnify the horrors of his sojourn, but rather point out the good that lies hid in the dim and obscure nature of the savage.

I will take in order the best types of the child-man whom, by good-fortune, as I count it, I have had the opportunity of studying. I will begin in Africa, pass on to Asia, return by Europe—where there is still, as I shall show, a real, intelligible, naked savage of savagery—and thence across the wide Atlantic to America.

He must have been a very Lavater, a Morton, a Gliddon, or a Thurnam, who at first sight had recognised Hassan Beni Something as a savage pure and simple, as in truth he was, and, if yet alive, is, I doubt not, still. He was the earliest type I met of this great family, and even yet the most incomprehensible to me. There are many in England who will recognise handsome Hassan; nay—for I think he reads English—it is not impossible that he will recognise himself in studying the back numbers of *Chambers's Journal* in some sweltering calm upon his native Nile. For Hassan is, or was, a dragoman, and a favourite with dukes and earls, and Englishmen generally, whom he has safely piloted along the glorious river. Should he see this notice of himself, I know it will not offend nor move him, as you shall shortly understand.

I first saw Hassan in the veranda or porch of Shepherd's Hotel, when, almost a boy, I set forth upon my travels. Seeing him there, with his beautiful face—so soft in colour and feature, so spirited in expression—with his graceful form wrapped in the gorgeous costume of a wealthy Arab—Nizam jacket of brown satin, sapur or waistcloth of Persian gold-work, trousers of purple silk, and tarboosh swathed in a handkerchief brighter than flowers—I stood and gazed, being yet fresh to oriental types, and thought that the more delicate style of manly beauty could never by possibility find an embodiment more exquisitely perfect. I spoke to him, and he answered in good English, but with a tone, not disobliging perhaps, but tinged with a certain assumption of superiority, which I did not then in the least comprehend. While we talked some ladies galloped up the wide and dreary street from Boulak, and halted their donkeys beneath us at the steps of the hotel. They were fresh young girls, rather noisy, very red and hot, having perhaps something more than the average of healthy strength in their limbs and of loud mirth in their voices; but why, I wondered in innocence—why did Hassan draw together his fine eyebrows so very darkly? and why did he spit

over his shoulder in that spiteful manner? Seeking the clue, I led our conversation to the topic of native customs in regard to women; but Hassan grimly remarked at once: "Sir, we poor Arabs have a proverb: A man never talks of his treasure till he has lost it!"

I pondered this oracle awhile, and failing to see its meaning—though dimly conscious that some very fearful rebuke was contained therein—boldly inquired whether so handsome a fellow had a wife, or two, or a dozen.

Hassan gave a sudden start, spat furiously, and with trembling fingers, snatched a document from his belt, "There, sir," he said, thrusting the unintelligible characters under my nose—"Hassan Beni Something is a dragoman, licensed by the pacha. He's no slave of yours!"

Half-laughing, half-remorseful, I soothed the fiery fellow; and, in a stately manner, he agreed to pass over my offence.

After this, accident threw me a great deal in Hassan's way, and I had full opportunity of studying a character of the East which we in England know nothing and think nothing of. The handsome dragoman was a passionate fanatic for his religion; and though scarcely twenty-five years of age, I suppose, could already boast of two conversions. He knew the Koran by heart, of course; and not the Koran only, but a dozen minor prophets of his creed. Finding me very inquisitive, and a capital listener to his marvellous tales, and philosophy not less marvellous, Hassan entertained sanguine hopes of rescuing yet another soul from the devil's claws. I did not know until afterwards what overpowering ambition it was which made the fanatic so tolerant of my continual offences against his code of ethics, many of which, I fear, were committed in pure mischief; but twelve months after, I was assured, on authority not to be mistaken, that prayers had been offered, and hopefully too, on my behalf, by no less a person than the chief dervish of the college at Boulak, my very good friend. It is not every man who can boast that his welfare was so much a care to strangers; and even now, I feel no little pride in thinking

that an old man, good and sincere, should have prayed for the safety of my soul, though in the name of a false prophet.

But to return to Hassan. One by one, not without difficulty, I drew out those wonderful opinions and beliefs, the discovery of which leads me to class this most elegant of dandies, the favourite of peers and princesses, among the very grossest savages in my long list. His philosophy was of the simplest, and may be thus stated: This world was created perfect and holy by Allah; every change, spiritual or physical, that has since altered the face of things, was contrived by the influence of Shaitan: therefore are the nations most advanced most sinful.

"See," Hassan remarked to me one day at the railway-station at Cairo—"see the devil's sign in this your greatest invention! Fire is his emblem and chief agent; smoke is the token of him; noise and confusion his invariable followers. Are they not all here for a witness? Your railway-trains and your manufactories are taking you all to perdition, sir!"

"Bravo, Hassan!" I replied. "Yet you do not disdain to profit by our condemnation."

"I am holy, and the devil serves me," returned the dragoman with the calmness of conviction.

This was hopeless.

"How can you consent to be a servant of Infidels?" I asked one day.

"I trust that the sight and contact of a believer may turn their wretched minds," he replied. "And I thirst to see the holy place at Mecca."

I was somewhat struck with a remark he made in answer to my inquiry: "Would you die for your faith, Hassan?"

"Yes, sir. I would *fight* until I died a thousand times."

Sometimes—when his hopes of me rose to a sanguine point, I suppose—Hassan even spoke about his family. "How many converts have you made?" I asked.

"Two, sir. There was a girl also."

"A girl? Who was she?"

"An Abyssinian slave, sir, whom I bought and married. The white ladies at Alexandria had taught her their false religion, or enough of it to turn her head. I converted her to the truth. She is now devout, as far as a woman can be so."

"And how did you convince the girl? Did you beat her?"

Hassan gazed at me steadily, with that oriental calm which is the substitute for a Frenchman's shrug, an Italian's "che!" or an Englishman's loudly-phrased disgust.

"You did not beat her? Did you argue with her, then? No! Of course not! A girl! How was the result effected?"

"I told my women to convert her, and it was done."

"How?" I insisted with boyish pertinacity.

"She is a very good and pious Mussulman."

"But how did it come about?"

The rare and soon-veiled glance of humour came to Hassan's eyes. "I don't know," he said; "I didn't ask; but—I saw a large pin lying about when I returned home!"

"And with what instrument did you secure your other proselytes? A thumbscrew? There's a good deal of business done hereabouts with a common ladder, I've heard, or even with a bucket and a wasp's nest. Which is your favourite tool for converting folks?"

"Sir," replied Hassan with dignity, "I have told you the other two were *men!*"

Yet this strange fellow had supported his stepmother in idleness for many years, and had pinched himself to marry his sisters respectably, and to their own wish.

I bade adieu to Hassan among the mud-built huts of El Luxor, firing a last shot at his philosophy as I turned towards the Nile. "See these mighty ruins," I said, "built by pagans; see these kennels of the true believers built among them. If, without sin, you may command the devil, would it not be well to set him at work among your brethren?"

"Nay," replied the fanatic; "for there are weak hearts even among the faithful, and to tempt them would be unpardonable sin. I rather pray daily that the Infidel arts may perish, and the world grow pure again!" Clearly, a hopeless savage, but honest and kindly as he was handsome.

Of a very different type was the second example I shall select from a crowded *répertoire*. A worthy man he was, dwelling in the depths of a Bornean forest, in a house overshadowed with pénang palms and "lancet trees," thick with acid fruit; a very old man, with the face of a sheep expiring from mental affliction, the form of a gander suffering from atrophy, and the costume of primeval man after the Fall. He sat, when I first caught sight of him, upon a log, in a deep green shadow of giant trees: the expression of his innocent face showed deep perplexity. Between his naked and distorted feet lay a basket of stained ratan, filled and overflowing with fragments of cloth, tiny bells, boars' tusks, alligators' teeth, dry seeds, deer-horns, threads of wool, and knotty twigs. Over these valuable "properties" the old man was pondering, much harassed in mind by the incurable stomach-ache of his "orang kaya," or chief. For this typical savage of mine was a "Manang," a medicine-man, a conjurer, thief-catcher, devil-fighter, of some eminence among the worthy Undups, as his tribe are called. Straightway, perceiving him thus occupied, and warned by my Malay guide—not without some awe, though the laugh of orthodox scorn rang out very clearly—what was the profession of this forest-born practitioner, I addressed him with spirit, and was answered in all politeness. Would I could render the terms of our conversation with the simplicity and humour which no doubt they carried; but, alas, the manang's voluble tongue spoke no intelligible dialect to me, and I myself was not yet so conversant with Malay that I could even talk with my interpreter first-hand. But somewhat in this manner our discourse proceeded, as I am told:

I. Ask the old fellow what he is doing here, Ali.

Interpreter. The lord who eats at the rajah's table asks why you are not at your unimportant work in the rice-fields, Infidel.

Manang. I am praying for the safety of my lord.

Interpreter. He say he make charms for have you brave and lots of wife.—That a lie, Tuan!

I. Ask him what are those odds and ends in the basket there.

Interpreter (directly). Oh, them be dam rubbish, Tuan—what he make medicine of, to doctor fools when they sick. All nonsense and dirty rags, Tuan!

I. Ask the old man.

Interpreter. The lord who sleeps in the rajah's bed condescends to inquire what you mean by collecting such infernal bosh as that basket contains, Infidel?

Manang. The lord is very kind to his slave.—These are the evil spirits I have extracted from my numerous and deeply grateful patients. They have great power to cure the sick, to drive out the best-born devils, and to ensure good harvests. They are the chief treasures of the Undups.

Interpreter (with wrath). O infidel dog, Dyak cow! Will you repeat your mummeries before my face? Will you insult the meanest follower of the Prophet? Will you—will you—

I. Easy, Ali. What does the old boy say?

Interpreter. I say he a pig, Tuan!—a dog, a foul Dyak sorcerer! He know our holy faith; and instead of that, he stick like gum to his bits of bone and feathers! He go to perdition—you go to perdition, old Manang!

Manang. Whatever my lord wishes. I pray for him and all his servants.

Interpreter (at white-heat). You pray for me! You pray for me! you cotton-headed, pénang-sucking, white-toothed, raki-swilling old impostor! You Dyak djour, that will never see heaven—that has no heaven, nor any Allah, nor spirit, nor future life! You pig, that will sink into the earth as a stone sinks, nor ever be heard of or seen again in the other world! You pray

for me to your lumps of wax and bits of bone! Allah, that made me, knows how I would crush the life from your old carcass, were it not that my lord, who leans upon the rajah's knees, and is weak in his poor English head, condescends to take notice of you. Yah!

I. Hold your confoundedly orthodox tongue, Ali! How are these things used?

Interpreter (sulkily). The lord who is acquainted with the rajah's wife by sight, asks what are your confounded games with this rubbish, Infidel?

Manang. Tell my lord these are great secrets. Tell him that they cure the sick, and bring good luck upon a house. Tell him they are mysteries incomprehensible; and their result, when properly used, is infallible. With them I can destroy my enemies and heal my friends, rain storms, bring rain or sunshine, sink ships, win battles, cause success in head-hunting and the chase. I can do anything—anything. And if the lord be pleased with his slave, good Ali, ask him for a little English medicine to cure the fever that is burning me up—a little of that bitter stuff the 'orang putih' use. I am very ill.

Interpreter (with innocence). The old man's charms, he say, good for anything, and play the debbil. He want a bit of quinine to cure his ague. Don't give him any, Tuan! He very wicked.

Wondering which was the bigger fool of these two, I went my way through the shadowy forest, all unconscious at the time that I had been introduced to a character of no small note among the simple and superstitious Dyaks. Months after, I was thrown for some time in the company of this medicine man, and expended much time and ingenuity in the investigation of his real belief; but to this day I cannot tell whether he had faith or not in that strange medley of rubbish which contained his pharmacopœia, his ritual, dogmas, and vestments.*

* Whether the Manang could cure others' sickness—he could not cure his own!—may with reason be doubted, but I had abundant and unquestionable

Returning to Europe, with the half-mournful thought that I had done with savages and savage life for ever, I found myself, one bright and windy Christmas-day, beating back and forth across the mouth of Porto Torres harbour. Do you, O reader, know in what hole or corner of our continent to seek that ancient refuge? Though you be a brother member of the Geographical, I will wager all my 'traveller's tales' you never so much as heard of it. Porto Torres is the northerly harbour of that beautiful island called Sardinia. The granite cliffs which scowl or laugh across the ever-restless sea, the massy walls which gird the island round, gape suddenly at this spot, and leave a narrow and most perilous channel into a tiny bay. No other ports exist, or ever will be formed, probably, on this end of the island. Porto Torres at the north, and the glorious Bay of Cagliari to the south, are the only breaks in the natural defences of this coast. I landed, then, with a gay company, determined to explore the innermost recesses of a land less known to Europe than many a barbarous realm of the antipodes. At my first step ashore, I admired the stately column, standing all alone these thousand years, which still bears witness for Greek art and Roman power; wandering up the street, I admired the countless fragments of temple and bath, column and statue, which now build up whole walls of field and hut. And as I passed beyond the tiny village, I vented my soul in marvelling at masses, piles and hills of ruin, which record the existence here of a city covering miles of ground. I passed beneath colossal archways yet erect, and climbed along Cyclopean walls yet standing—walls older than Rome, older than Athens, old perhaps as the hoary pyramids themselves.

Amazed and bewildered with the discovery of such marvels, feeling somewhat as Stephens may have felt among the ruins of

testimony that he was guaranteed by some means against reptile poison. The Malays assure me that this security is produced by inoculation of the venom in different parts of the body; which may be true. The same practice obtains in America.

Palenqué, I took my way back to the port, revolving a communication to the *Times* or *Athenæum* that should startle a blasé world—which communication was never written. But let me tell the antiquarian reader that such treasures of his favourite seeking are to be found in the island of Sardinia as never he dreamed of. Now and then, as the archæologist will remember, gems of art have been brought to England from this soil—Etruscan, Greek, Roman, and Saracen. The priceless scarabæi, which link Egypt with Etruria, the great Greek glasses, a thousand of the most valuable and curious antiquities in our collections, come from this wealthy but most miserable island. Yet I can assure the antiquary that scarce one discovery has been made except by accident; or if there ever were attempts at scientific search, they have long since been abandoned, and dwell not in men's memory. I myself, in such huts as I shall presently describe, have seen vases and urns, bronzes, coins, and household instruments, such as would bring beyond their weight in gold at the dealers' shops of London. None care for them there—they are too common. Nor are the remains of temple and palace less frequent or less interesting. But I dare not dwell upon this fascinating subject.

From Porto Torres—where there is no inn—I took a rattling diligence, which thrice a week traverses the sole road in the island, between Cagliari and this northern harbour. These are indeed the only towns, and they lie something like a hundred miles apart—rather more, if I remember right. Having before us a journey of many hours, we proposed to take the whole inside of the conveyance; but the clerk, with rare honesty, assured us that this expense was quite unnecessary: "There are never any passengers, signori—never, never!" he said with emphasis. At a certain village, whereof I forget the name, we left the diligence, and demanded our guides and horses. They came after a while; and in the white and glimmering haze of dawn, we set out in search of a very Nimrod, a mighty hunter, who dwelt a day's

journey off among the pine forests. I have not delayed to speak of the scenery, or of the strange folks who people it; suffice it that the land is lovely, and the inhabitants hideous. One league from Porto Torres, five from Cagliàri, thrusts the Sardinian traveller into the middle ages. Thus were our forefathers six hundred years ago, in costume, in habits, in thought, in everything but speech. And what a marvellous speech that is of the savages! Neither Italian, Spaniard, nor Arab can comprehend it, so ingeniously have the elements of these three languages been hashed up with a seasoning of pure rigmarole. The Maltese, whose Arabic is almost as barbarous, get on best in Sardinia; but the quantity of Spanish and Italian words are just sufficient to confuse the predominant dialect. How little is known, even by their nearest neighbours, of this strange people, will be apparent when I mention that in Italy every one assured us their national tongue was generally spoken, or at least understood, throughout the island—whereas the fact is, as we found to our expense, not one person in five hundred has any knowledge whatever of Italian, or any other language except this semi-arabic *patois*. Let me get to my savage however—though, indeed, none can avoid digressing in Sardinian travel; for the plains are uncultivated, except around paltry, mud-built villages, which, were it not for the vegetation, one would swear were Kaffir kraals, or Fellah huts. Where this trifling agriculture is not seen, the ground is covered with a bushlike rhododendron, which, at Christmas-time, spreads a sheet of purple blossom over the plain. Rides, smooth as though trimmed by unseen gardeners, intersect each thicket of the cover, and by these natural paths one winds across the level. Partridges whirl up each instant, pigeons rise in clouds, woodcocks and snipe twist aloft from the pond-banks; now and again, with a mighty clashing of the boughs, a whirlwind of flying leaves, with grunts, and cries, and snapping of teeth, a herd of hogs dash along the path; or a huge red boar, with tusks fresh ground, with lips apart, and little eyes all fiery,

trots over by himself, glancing at the intruders, as though undecided whether to pass or to attack. Sometimes, no doubt, after domestic troubles such as rouse his lordly nature, he *does* charge, and then ——

Have you ever been attacked by a wild-boar? Have you stood all alone, with empty rifle and griped spear, before the forest-king? I have—by night on the golden beach of a far Eastern sea. He fronts me, black and terrible, beside the creeping water, a horrent mass against the spreading halo of the moon. By day, too, I have faced him, in a wood dazzling with the keen tropic light. The brilliant pencilled sun-rays sprinkle his dismal head; his small eyes burn with spite upon me, and seem verily to laugh with triumphant malice. See, see! The rigid bristles of the neck tremble and heave in an agony of rage; the big teeth snap, their foam spirts to your face. He has gathered breath. He comes! Now grasp the spear tight, and bend to earth and pray, for rarely in this life doth one face deadlier risk than the charge of a black Eastern boar. That scream!—that ponderous rush! A sudden weight dashes you to the earth, while the sun-flecked trees spin round, and the bamboos tear your flesh. You leap up; you dash the blood-drops from your face. Hurrah! The boar lies prone, with a good lance buried to the cross-bar in his heart! Rejoice, comrade, that neither you nor I as yet have felt that deadly sickness, of a pulse-beat's length, which comes over the doomed shikari, as his lance-point slides along the leathern shoulder of his foe. For him is no help in the cruel, sunny forest. Too many tragedies the flowers see, too many sudden fates, too many cries of agony they hear! The birds will twitter, and the gemmed flies dance, though a man's body lie in fragments underneath the trees. None will hear your groans, if life remain; none give you aid, while the last gurgling breaths escape your throat; nay, but a thousand tiny foes will set upon you, more cruel far than that brave old boar, who long since has crashed off, triumphing in his vengeance, through the brushwood.

These digressions are intolerable, but forgive them, reader, to an overflowing memory! I will sin no more.

Two days after leaving the diligence-road, we reached the pine-forests, and here I straightway lost, first my guide, and then myself. I rode for some hours in no small anxiety, being already aware how few were the paths, and how scant the population of these hills. It was almost sunset when I struck a path which led me to a little clearing, where I encountered my European savage. I saw worse specimens, and few better, of the human race, in my Sardinian wanderings; but I select him for portraiture because the *mise en scène*, the properties, all about him, were so exquisitely perfect on that first introduction. The clearing had been evidently a Roman mine two thousand years ago. Walls and pits still remained to show its former use, and more than one of the ruins might have been made habitable by the mere addition of a roof. This style of dwelling, however, is not to the taste of the Sardinian savage. He prefers to select a piece of level ground, which he incloses in walls of timber, like a bear-trap. When the square is complete, he roofs it with sticks, and moss, and heath; *then* he thinks of providing a door and a window. These necessaries are produced by cutting two holes through the walls, and tying the intersected beams firmly together. After entrance and light are thus provided for, he grubs up the turf and bushes *inside*, flattens the ground, puts in a log for a seat, and another for a table, stores his gunpowder in a nook furthest from the usual hearth, and goes out to seek his sustenance among the boars and roebucks of the forest. Their flesh feeds him, their skins make his bed and clothes. If he have a wife, she spins a little wool for under-garments; if he have none, the sale of game from time to time—at one halfpenny a pound for boar's flesh, one penny for venison—supplies him with all things needful. The agricultural instinct is sometimes indulged in a tiny field about the size of a child's garden; more frequently it is not indulged at all; and a porridge of chestnuts and wild vegetables

satisfies the moderate desire of change in diet which the savage knows. From week to week he sees no one, except perhaps the wife and possible family aforesaid; he speaks to none except his dogs, or maybe himself; he knows the iron mines, and sometimes smelts a little ore in winter evenings; he knows the silver mines, ay, and the long-lost veins of gold, but rarely turns his knowledge to account; he gathers carbuncles and turquoise, which he barters for powder and spirits; he goes to mass at Christmas, and there confesses his sins, which seem to be more heinous than appears, at first sight, possible; he knows no sin, nor any good, and is as true a savage as in all my wanderings I have seen.

And thus I found him employed, as I rode up the long shadowy aisle of firs that made an avenue to his dwelling. He sat upon a log—a tall, bearded, muscular fellow, not without some remains of that earnest beauty which Moorish ancestors have left to his race at its fairest. His body was enwrapped in a jerkin of wild-sheep skin, the dark brown ridge of the animal's back falling along his spine, and its white belly clasped across his chest. There it was secured with vast buttons of silver, hanging each by a little chain. Through holes at each shoulder, the wiry arms emerged. His drawers, immensely wide, were of home-spun wool, not white, as is the national fashion, but of a coarse blue; these were tucked tightly into leggings of wild-boar hide, which, as I afterwards discovered, were the real skin of the animal's legs, stripped off uncut, and fitted, while still soft, to the limbs of the human brute. The occupation of my savage, when I discovered him, was beautifully harmonious; he was breaking up a *mufflonè*, that rare animal, which now only survives among these mountains. Around the carcass, with eager eyes, crowded a pack of dogs, fat and handsome enough, which fought for the morsels flung from time to time among them. Suddenly, their master thrust his reeking arm into the carcass, and produced a gory mass—heaven knows what dainty! This he balanced for an instant in his hand,

then, with some harsh call, tossed it into the air. A child, yes, a girl, suddenly bounded up from her couch upon the ground, and caught the precious prize before it fell. She laughed with glee—I saw her and heard her!—and straightway, pressing the horrid, streaming object to her naked bosom, vanished into the house; and simultaneously, all the dogs caught sight of the intruder, and dashed at me.

The savage rose hastily, and snatched up his long gun. I made signs of friendship, and drew near. He called off the dogs, and welcomed me without a word, yet in a manner not quite devoid of that grave courtesy which his darker brethren practise. I asked for food in the French *patois* of Corsica, in Italian, in Spanish, and lastly, in Malay; he understood not a whit, but resumed his seat for greater convenience of staring. I made signs, and at a call the horrid child emerged again from her retreat, and, with a fearsome bashfulness, approached. The savage gave me to eat—I know not what horror. He sat with his long gun between his knees, and watched. It grew dark. I recalled my Arabic, and asked for a bed. The dreadful child took me within, and pointed out a pile of deerskins. The savage followed us after a while, with his gun at the "order." Inspirited by his example, I clasped my rifle between my knees, and lay down, as many a time had I lain in less dangerous company. Less dangerous! Not so! I will bear peril with any man and cry not, but horrible insects in my bed I cannot endure! For a time, I reasoned with my nose, my gorge; finally with every inch of skin upon my body; then I arose and sallied out cautiously. At the instant they were on my track, the savage and his whelp—one armed with the inevitable gun, the other with a knife. Ah! but the moonlight was glorious without, streaming down in snowy flakes through the wide branches of the pines, lighting up those sculptured witnesses of a grander time which lay around the hovel.

I paid no attention to my host, but leisurely selected a dry

spot beneath a pine, threw myself down, and slept with one eye open. And at midnight came my friend, with both the guides; and he fired his rifle over me, to rouse the savage. For behold, all unaware, I had stumbled on the abode of the greatest shikari of Sardinia, of whom we had been in search. He was a savage of savagery; and, such as he was, is he still, I doubt not. There is no reformation, no hope nor chance, for such as he.

One word more only; a word I have wished long to utter, for the benefit of English sportsmen and travellers. Go to Sardinia, you who love shooting, and are not afraid of hardship. There will you find feathered game thicker than sparrows in England; there will you find roebuck and wild-boar in such numbers that your very arm will ache with slaughter; there, with luck and skill, may you once, or even twice or thrice, stand over the carcass of the glorious moufflon, and boast of the moment to your dying day, seeing that almost every head of the noble beast still surviving is numbered and known among the foresters.

If you be an antiquary, go to Sardinia. If you be a miner, a philologist, go to Sardinia, for there are fortunes in its rocks, and fame in its unintelligible tongue. But if you be not stout and sturdy, withstand temptation, and stay at home.

THE NEGRO.

IN a certain sense of the word, nine in ten of the population between the Gulf of Mexico and the borders of Peru might be called savages, excepting here and there the dwellers in a little oasis of civilisation, such as Vera Cruz, Greytown, and Aspinwall on one coast, San Juan del Sur and Panama on the other. But it is of real barbarians I propose to treat, not of that very large class who may be conventionally so defined. Of such, then, there are three types noticeable in Spanish America—the Indian, commonest; the meztizo, or ladrone, the mixed blood; and the negro, exceedingly rare. I shall take the third of these for my first example.

All through Central America, from the States frontier to the Panama Railway, exclusive of the population dwelling on the latter boundary, negroes of pure blood are not common. There never was any large proportion of slaves in that quarter of the world, except in Mexico and San Salvador; and, to their honour be it told, the very first act of these despised republics, when, in 1821, the blighting authority of Spain was overturned, declared slavery or peonage in any form opposed to the rights of man and the will of God. This act, however, though a just cause of pride to the people of Central America, was doubtless facilitated in its passage by the fact that very few persons were held in such bondage, and by the absence of any powerful interest hostile to it. From one reason or another, the negro seems not to have been regarded here with that antipathy commonly found in a white population brought closely into contact with him. His freedom

proclaimed, he was immediately "miscegenated," as the Yankees say; and though the marks of his blood are common enough among all classes of society, the thoroughbred African himself has become rare. On the Atlantic coast, indeed, are found a few small colonies of emigrants, creole blacks from St. Thomas and Jamaica; and here and there is a settlement of that curious and interesting race, the Carib, of which people I am bound to declare that its males rival the Chinese in industry, and in honesty surpass all the world; while its females are so invariably chaste as to have given a proverb to the dissolute population, which their good example cannot shame into decency or good conduct. Whatever was the blood of these Caribs when deported, in 1796, to the island of St. Vincent, by the English Governor of Belize, they are now undistinguishable in any way from the pure negro stock, and the name of "Carib" still clinging to them is obviously a false description. Nevertheless, they are not likely to surrender it, for that name now carries a dignity and repute more valuable than passports or testimonials. "I Carib man, sah!" says a black fellow who comes for employment, standing upright before you, with a conscious pride of race and good name in his eyes; and if, on inquiry, his boast is found to be the truth, it only remains to settle wages and terms. A Carib's honesty and skill are among the self-evident verities of nature. But I must not dwell on this people, most interesting though it be, for not among such does one find a savage.

But Joe, or Joe'm, as he called himself, was undoubtedly a savage. Perhaps I ought to say something of my hero's birth and parentage, and I would with pleasure if I only knew anything. It is possible poor Joe had vague recollections of "where his rude hut by the Niger lay," but nobody seemed to care much about the matter, nor about any other sentimental feelings of Joe; indeed, summoning my memory to account, I am almost ashamed to find how very little I knew of the honest fellow in his capacity of individual. Joe was to me a realisation, an embodiment of the

wood-spirit; he was more like to "Man, the King of Animals," than any shikari I ever met. To see Joe stalking through the dim aisles of forest, his lithe figure, clad in flannel rags patched with fur, bending and swaying as though twisted with colic; his great feet treading noiselessly among rotten sticks and dry leaves; his eyes rolling round and round beneath ferocious brows; his thick lips twisting and twining all the while—to see Joe thus was to behold a somewhat startling apparition. But yet more impressive was my guide when his quick hearing thought to catch the "chump, chump, chumping" of a wild boar's tusks against a tree-trunk, half a mile away. When that sound reached him, he paused suddenly, and his great shapeless ears literally erected themselves like those of a dog. He always leaned against a tree to listen, closed his eyes, opened his mouth, and, as one could see, concentrated every faculty of his strange mind on the one sense of hearing. His ears really moved. Then, if the distant sound proved to be no fancy, it was grand to watch Joe's stealthy action: no wild beast could move more silently, or with a keener instinct of the least approach. I was never tired of contemplating my guide, and to this intense admiration of Joe in his business capacity it is, I think, to be attributed that I inquired so little of his private life. My talks with him were almost exclusively of game and wild adventure. But beyond doubt, now that the question occurs to me, Joe must have had a local habitation, if not a home, somewhere. I put the home in doubt, because that sacred word implies the presence of a wife, or at least of woman in some capacity; and I chance to know that this indefatigable hunter had but a desolate hearth, wherever it might be, for I remember well a conversation I had with him on this subject.

He was telling me something of his history, as we sat upon a fallen cotton-tree. Joe's language was the most extraordinary *patois* I ever heard, and utterly impossible to be rendered; in mentioning that "woman" was pronounced by him as "wah'n," with a strong aspirate, I shall give not the most curious example

of his utterance. He had been telling me how he was born, no one knew where, in the interior of Africa: that he was captured, he didn't know why or by whom, and taken as a slave down to the coast: that he was there embarked, after an unknown time, aboard a ship of undiscovered nationality; that the ship was captured at sea, under circumstances of which he had not been able to get any explanation; that in process of time, by events entirely outside his control or knowledge, he had been landed at a spot which, since he left it, had been identified to him as Sierra Leone, or Sarah Leh'n, as Joe preferred to call it: that people "had talked to him" there (here Joe evidently alluded to the missionaries): that he had been very happy, hunting in the woods and otherwise following his vocation, poor savage, until a gentleman of an unknown nationality had taken possession of him for unknown purposes and by unknown rights, and carried him to sea again, much to Joe's horror; for he had a wild-beast memory of anything that had been disagreeable or hurtful to him: that, when a few days were passed, he was set to do tasks wholly opposed to his instincts, and was cruelly treated on failure: that, once more, he was rescued "by an English captain, bless him!" —Joe began to know his friends and foes a little now, after an education of kicks and oaths!—and was landed, at his own request, in one of the West India isles, whence he had found his way to the mainland, where game is plentiful.

This was Joe's story—confused, inexplicable—a very chaos of incident unintelligible, but, in truth, the most pathetic tale ever I heard. To me, sitting, as is my wont from time to time, with the portrait of this poor fellow in hand, the blood seems suddenly to rise and boil at my heart, thinking of the story. I recall the broken sentences in which he told it—the rambling, muddled style; the down-trodden attitude he unconsciously assumed, as memory brought back those days of uncomprehended suffering. It was, I think, Joe's utter inability to understand why, how, where these things happened to him, which gave such a terrible

pathos to the tale. He, made in God's image, a man most brave and true and kindly, had been buffeted about the world, with no more comprehension of cause or reason than has a dog; nay, not so much, for he knew not friends from foes. Untold, untellable suffering and misery surround us on every side; but civilised beings understand their woes, can explain them, and, if the chance come, rise out of them. But this poor negro, forced from his home, from all with whom he could communicate, thrust at one fell instant from his barbarous quietude beside some African river into our enlightened, civilised, horrible world, was as utterly lost and dumbfoundered as though he had died by violence, and his soul had risen in another state of being. There is a tale of some chivalrous young Frenchman who so heated his indignant blood with the perusal of Spanish cruelties, that then and there he sallied out to avenge the crime of past generations on the offspring of the evil-doers. Such a wild impulse stirs in me sometimes as I think of poor Joe's wrongs.

However, it is not my hero's history I have to tell, but his character and tone of thought I would describe. We were sitting on the trunk of a cotton-tree, as aforesaid. "Are you married, Joe?" I asked, between two bites of a "tortilla."

(Already I have announced my incapacity to render the negro's *patois;* I don't attempt it.) "No, sir," he answered. "None of the 'muchachas' will have me."

"Why not?" I asked. "You're tall and stout. There isn't a man on the country-side who can hunt like you; and the business is profitable."

"Well, sir," he said, "I don't understand 'em. I'm nothing but a poor 'nigger,'* and I don't know creole ways. There's a girl I was sidling up to, shop-maid at a store yonder, not more'n

* "Nigger," among negroes, is a term of reproach applied to blacks of African birth, as opposed to those born in America or the islands. The latter call themselves "creoles," with the added name of their birthplace; Jamaica creoles, St. Thomas, &c.

half black. We was friendly, aud I give her peltries and 'pine quills" [porcupine quills], "and she took 'em kindly. But says she to me one day: 'What d'ye believe, Joe?'

"'Most anything,' I says, not knowing what she meant, you see.

"'D'ye believe in works?' she says.

"'Most sartin,' I replies.

"'Or d'ye believe in election?'

"'That's what I believe,' says I.

"'Not both?' she says.

"'No, not both!' says I.

"'Which, then?' says she.

"'Why, the other!' I says.

"So she called me bad names, in a way not fitting for a young girl speaking to a man. I held my tongue; and we parted."

"But you've tried again in another quarter?"

"Yes. I made out it was something they talk about in meeting-house that had set her off; this was in Greytown, of course. So I used to attend regular at the service there, and the minister was kind; like the folks at Sarah Leh'n he was."

"Did you understand what he said?" I asked.

"No, sir. I'm a poor nigger, and it was beyond me. He said we were to be good, which isn't Obi. I don't know what he meant by that. I asked Obi, and he told me the minister was right, whatever he said. So, after a while, I took up with a muchacha as lives behind the cocoa-nut trees on the lagoon. I said to her 'My trust is in election.' 'What's that?' she asks. 'Election,' I says. 'What's that?' says she. And I didn't know any more. 'You're a heretic!' she says a day or two afterwards. I didn't see what to answer, and so we dropped that acquaintance."

These recollections seemed to affect poor Joe painfully. He sat leaning on his rifle, and grinding at the dank earth with its but, observing with great interest the circles thus formed.

"Well, and what next?" I asked.

"I lost heart for a long time, and hid myself all day and all night in the woods. I never made a better time of it than that. Pigs and deer were more plentiful than ever I found them, and I even met a jaguar—which isn't common, you know, by Greytown. At last I put down the river, with nigh upon a hundred dollars' worth of hides, and seven full quills of gold-dust that I'd found in a creek. I met a young girl as fine as a quetzal bird, a stranger in Greytown—she was a washerwoman. After a week or so, I asked her to marry me, saying I was no heretic. 'All right,' says she. Somehow, I didn't like that. Says I: 'About election?' I says. 'Never you mind,' say she. 'And works?' I says. 'You've no call to trouble about that,' says she sharp. I thought she was no better than I was myself, and left her. I've not tried since. It seems as if there isn't no one in all this country as is suitable for a poor nigger!"

There were several points which struck me much in this little conversation, which I have not attempted to give textually, though preserving the *tone* as nearly as possible. First, it interested me to observe how entirely this savage possessed the instinctive sympathy—using the word in its strict sense—that distinguishes the creole negro. Though quite unconscious what was meant by the words of his first two loves, he had comprehended, by mere sympathy, that great importance attached to his answers, and that to ask what was meant by "election," "heretic," and so on, would be destructive to his chance. This quality of reading a person's mind when his words are utterly beyond understanding, is common with negroes, and, I think, is the secret of that liking which most tropical residents bear to them in the abstract. It is the same gift which an intelligent dog possesses in a less degree.

Another and more novel subject of reflection was the free use Joe made of Obi's name, that dire dissyllable which none willingly pronounce in the West Indies. When a blundering stranger, chokeful of questions and bits of half-knowledge, asks his host

about Obi and his worshippers, there is loud laughter in the household—maybe laughter a little too loud. "Obi, my dear sir!" repeats the host. "There is no such thing among us, and never was—never. You have your bugbear for children in England, and we have our Obi here—the same idea under a different name. It's enough to make one die of laughter to hear you English people take our Obi seriously. I might as well ask you 'the truth' about the giant Cormoran, or the black man who frightens your children to bed." So have respectable gentlemen expressed themselves to me who write. But long before Joe thus openly made allusions to the dread superstition, I knew how much to believe of the creole planter's eager denial.

Let Joe speak for himself and for his horrid faith. "Do you say, Joe," I asked, "that the dreadful monster you call Obi commanded you to obey the Christian minister?"

"He always does so, sir," Joe answered. "Never Obi tell a man to go against the minister."

"But you yourself said that Obi wasn't 'good.'"

Joe had no reply to this. He looked at me, and ground the but of his rifle into the soil. At length he repeated: "Never Obi tell a man to go against the minister."

On this I reflected for an instant. Joe's words explained in some degree a mystery that has perplexed very many persons who know the existence of Obi-ism, but cannot understand how a race so simply pious as is the negro—I speak of the *race*, mind—can reconcile the practice of a devilish superstition with the enthusiastic belief of evangelical Christianity. But Obi is equal to this difficulty. "Never he tells a man to go against the minister." But where the minister has not spoken, on doctrines and deeds the good man would shudder to contemplate, there Obi is master.

"You speak of consulting him. Does he live in the woods round here, and do you see him in the flesh?" I asked.

"I haven't seen Obi in the flesh these ten years: not since I landed at Greytown. Once I see him upon the Blue Mountains

behind Kingston. There isn't an Obi in this part of America, that I *know* of, sir."

"Not an Obi? Are there several, then?" And on this I drew from Joe an explanation of the idolatry, most valuable and curious, I think, to those who feel an interest in the negro race. I would fain put into some order the facts he confusedly revealed.

"Obi" is not the name of a deity, as is the common belief. Comparative philologists connect the word with *ophis*, a snake, and deduce from this fact the most singular arguments. I cannot say how far the derivation may be correct; but if, as Joe declared to me, the Obi is *not* a deity, nor even an emanation, it is evident that much of the theory founded on this basis is incorrect. Obi, I learned, is but the title of a man—a man gifted with strange and magical powers, it is true, but simply a man. One is born Obi; no person can acquire the attributes or the title. The child so favoured is recognised almost at birth by his supernatural potency over men's minds. By whom he is swayed, or for what purpose the power is given him, no one investigates, or dares to inquire. The Obi is—the Obi! a terrible fact, a curse, seldom or never a blessing to his neighbours. It is a most important truth to be known, that Obi, all-powerful for evil, seems impotent for good—and by his own confession, he can kill, but he cannot generate life—he can curse, but not bless. The Obi is a solitary being, a lover of caverns, and deep forests, a feeder on strange meats, a hater of the light. From his seclusion he casts the darts of death, and never do they fail to strike. He dreads his own horrible faculty, and rolls upon the floor in speechless terror when summoned to do the work that men crave of him. But, whether unconscious agent or irresponsible, or no, Obi never fails. Pestilence is a weapon in his hand; dreams and apparitions are obedient to his will; all the baleful secrets of nature reveal themselves to his intuition—the deadly uses of herb and tree, and of animate and inanimate life.

I have but room for a very few of Joe's candid revelations. I

choose those which may possibly explain in some degree the manner of Obi's working.

"How did you consult this fearful being, since he is as far away as the Blue Mountains?" I asked.

"Obi gave me a charm, which I wrap round my head at night, when I wish to see him. He never fails to appear in my dreams, and to tell me all I want to know."

"Has he given you any other charms?"

"One—a hunting charm. I never miss when I have it on me, and never hit when without it."

"Is it true that Obi delights in poisonings and frenzies?"

"I don't know. They say that if a man ask him for a poison or a philtre, he cannot refuse. I know nothing of that."

"Most of the Obis are women, are they not?"

"No," exclaimed the negro with contempt. "Obi has more work than he can do, and therefore gives power, for a short time, to the fetich women. But when the time is past, they are no stronger than other people, only they know the poisons and medicines. Then they go about doing mischief, until they're caught and hanged by the magistrates, or thrown into a creek at night by the negroes. Obi's never caught, nor dare any one touch him."

"Are there many Obis?"

"Only two in all Jamaica, and one of 'em's only a poor nigger, they say. But there's a plenty of your fetich women!"

So this savage discoursed to me sitting on a cotton-tree in the forest by the San Juan River. And the conclusion that rested on my mind, in regard to Obi, was this: if there be truth in mesmerism and electro-biology, there is the secret of his dreaded power; if there be not truth therein, then the trick of one is the trick of the other.

THE HALF-BLOOD.

MY experiences could supply a hundred examples of the "mestizo" savage. I select for illustration that specimen which most irritated and amused me at the time.

He was, and very likely is still, the parish priest, the *cura*, of a little mountain village. On the map hanging against my wall, this hamlet, which I recollect so well, is marked in big letters as a town of the second class. This fact does not surprise me; our geographers are so utterly ignorant, scientifically, of Central America, that, where they have traced the course of big rivers, I have tramped along dry-footed; in a morning's walk, I have crossed mountain chains of theirs higher and broader than Helvellyn; I have eaten "papyas" and "zapotés" in the midst of their deserts; and shot fish on the cone of their volcanoes. It does not at all astonish me, then, to observe that this little oasis in the Sahara of trees, lost as it is and stifled among the eternal leaves, should be raised by our well-intentioned topographers to the dignity of a borough.

We had reached it late one evening, and never, I recollect, was traveller more glad than I to gain his journey's end, for my feet were full of *neguas*—jiggers, as West Indians call them. I never examined this little pest with a microscope; but, on Mr. Waterton's authority, I accept the fact that it presents the appearance of a flea in miniature. Unlike that lively creature, however, the negua prefers an underground life, burrowing beneath the skin of man and beast, and, under that shelter, marrying and giving in marriage. If undisturbed, it will breed and breed in its hiding-

place, till a permanent lameness is caused, and amputation of the part attacked—generally the feet—becomes necessary. I have seen the most horrible, most incredible deformities produced by this tiny plague, which is not bigger than a pin's head; and never, after the experience of that day, did I fail to have my feet examined each night, to arrest in time the proceedings of the enemy.

We found shelter in the hut of a carpenter, and next morning, after a painful extraction of the jiggers and their brood, I crawled across the plaza, under guidance of my host, to find the parish priest; for we had heard of notable antiquities, earthworks and tombs and ruins, in this neighbourhood, and wanted his encouragement in exploring them. Under the shadow of a little church built of mud, roofed with sunburned tiles, and flanked on either side the entrance by a ghastly, wide-mouthed idol of stone, a remnant of the old times, which it would scarcely have been safe or wise to remove now, we found the "parsonage" a filthy den of two apartments. Its roof, like all others of the village, sloped out beyond the house-wall, supported on four posts of wood, and thus formed a sort of piazza. Therein hung a hammock of twine, in which was suspended the cura's body, between heaven and earth; but much, much nearer, now and at all times, to earth than heaven. Three ill-looking fellows lounged against wall or post around him, smoking cigaritos, and half-dozing, though the sun had been up two hours. There was a bad smell about the place and about the men; not merely the sensible odour of drink, and dirt, and unhealth, but an odour morally unwholesome. A mean and wretched spot enough was that plaza outside, its faded grass strewn with rags and broken shards, a dingy little church on its one side, a dingy *presidio* on the other—with naked ruffians of soldiery lounging about the door—and a row of kennel-like huts around. But the sun beat broadly down upon it, the diamond-bright air quivered, parrots and blue jays fluttered across it, returning from the river to the deep forest shade; whilst under the gloom of that portico, of which the shadow fell keen and blue as

a steel blade upon the ground, the three men blinked and muttered like unclean things; and their spiritual guide, hanging in the centre, poured out rings of smoke from his swollen lips, and grunted in dogmatic monosyllables. This scene we beheld, walking up the colonnade before the huts.

On coming nearer, one of the clerical *compadres* turned, hearing the unaccustomed sound of boots upon the hard clay floor. At his low exclamation of surprise, the *padre* raised himself, and stared, in a brutally silent fashion, at ourselves. After a moment's examination he sank back again along his hammock, with a muttered remark, at which the three friends laughed aloud. We came up and stood beside him. While the carpenter humbly explained our wishes, the priest regarded us with sleepy insolence, until one of my companions, a hot-headed French miner, declared his intention of pulling the *grédin* out of his hammock. Whether the cura understood the threat, or whether he was influenced by a hint of possible profit to the church, judiciously dropped by our host, I don't know, but he rose in a languid manner, with the assistance of all his three friends, and descended. Then we perceived that a vicious life, and not years or privation, had swelled the priest's face and limbs. He was probably not more than twenty-five years of age. His face had the fleshy bloated roundness that tells of brutality; his eyes and lips that moisture and unsteadiness which continual indulgence brings. It was not an ugly face in feature. The dark and brassy skin, the hair curling slightly in dank tresses, the prominent eyes and cheek-bones, plainly revealed his "mixed blood;" but the unnatural combination is not always uncomely. He was dressed in a long and filthy *soutane*, and trousers of the very brightest pea-green. Round his neck were twisted several coils of blue glass beads. A little pouch of feather-work, adorned with a fringe of mouse's teeth, hung upon his chest beside the crucifix. What it contained the owner only knows, but it looked suspiciously like a charm-case. His feet, of course, were bare, and the pea-green trousers only

reached to the ponderous calf of his legs. Such was the figure that descended from the hammock, and stood sullenly staring before us. A more savage, wicked-looking face, for all its rude proportion of features, never saw I in my wanderings.

"These English gentlemen have come to your town to find 'Carib' antiquities," began our French companion.

"*A su disposicion*," blundered the padre, with an air of utter bewilderment.

"They hear that a great castle of the 'Caribs' exists near this, and many graves where the Carib kings were buried."

(All through Central America, Indian remains are called "Carib." This designation has not of course any connection with the mahogany-cutters of Honduras, who now bear the old title without much justice or reason.)

"*A su disposicion*," muttered the padre.

"They want you to help them in finding the Carib remains."

Then his savage blood broke out. "I'm not a Carib!" shouted the cura, his thick skin puffing with rage. "I'm not a prying devil of a foreigner (*un curioso entremetido de los diables!*). *Soy caballero Catalano*, ah! There's no one here cares a 'monkey's grin' about your heretic charms, your devil-stones, and unholy things! Ach! Go to the French brutes across the mountains then! Perhaps they'll help you to your soul's destruction!" * Then turning his back on us with unspeakable contempt and hatred, he snatched a mule-whip from the hammock, and addressed one of his friends: "How goes the lame mare, Guliermo mio?" he said.

Our French companion seized the insolent scoundrel by the trailing skirt of his soutane, and twisted him sharply round. It was a face perfectly fiendish which this priest turned on us. He raised his heavy whip, and the three worthies made an ominous movement of the right hand towards their machete hilts; but we,

* I have softened the padre's language considerably. His metaphorical anathema was very picturesque, but untranslatable.

throwing back the loose edge of our jackets, quietly displayed the revolvers on our hip. With that quickness to apprehend personal danger which is characteristic of the savage wherever I have met him, and that equal disregard of personal dignity, our padre, on the instant, changed his expression to one of sulky complaisance, and said: "What can I do for your service? I know nothing of Carib remains. We are very poor here, in this town; very, very humble. It is with difficulty that my sheep support their miserable existence, and provide for the eternal safety of their souls. You see, señores, they have no time to search for old stones and Carib rubbish. They are not Caribs or heretics here, thanks to the good St. James; and they know that honest people do not care for such things, if they exist—that is, not honest people of this country, you see, señores! For my own part, caballeros, rely upon me to do all that is possible to assist you; but there never were any Caribs in this neighbourhood, nor other *mala gente*, until the gold was discovered on the other side the forest. But" —and here his sudden change of tone was delightful for the cynic to perceive—"twenty leagues further over the mountain are plenty of Caribs, even to this day. I know nothing of them myself, but our bishop endeavours to convert those poor heathen, at great cost of prayer and money: if any of your dignities feel the Christian spirit, and desire to advance their eternal welfare, *I* am the unworthy receiver of such contributions as your benevolence may choose to offer. Any sum, however small, may, by the good St. James's blessing, be instrumental in rescuing a soul. Let me pray of your dignities;" &c. We tossed him a dollar, and left, hoping never again to behold his face, so expressive of a brutal hypocrisy. And even while we passed from off his portico into the wholesome sunlight without, he proceeded rapidly to gather up the long skirts of his garment for riding, to roll them round his fat waist under the girdle, and thus to display all the length, and more especially the breadth, of his pea-green trousers.

Two days afterwards, we left the village on our way to the gold-diggings. There we passed our Christmas as merrily as is possible in the most extraordinary settlement of an extraordinary country; and a fortnight after, rode back to the hut of our carpentering host. In the evening, while we sat without his door, watching the red sunshine pass swiftly up and up from bough to bough of the great forest trees on the opposite hill-side—ah! those days, those sights of my past wanderings, how divine regret stirs within me in recalling them!—a clamour in the street above disturbed our meditations. We looked up, and beheld our foe, the padre, staggering towards us, yelling out the equivocal ditty: 'De Guadalajara vengo, lideando con un soldado," &c. The villagers stood at their doors, looking without surprise or apparent disgust at their pastor, who, with his soutane kilted, and all his pea-green trousers displayed, rolled along the street, keeping time to the music with furious cuttings and crackings of his mule-whip. He approached, and halted in front of us. After pausing a while in deep consideration of our appearance, the padre lifted his broad straw-hat and spoke with drunken solemnity. "Machitos caballeros," he said, and paused. Then the brilliancy of this witticism, of addressing us as "little he-mule horsemen," overpowered him; he laughed long and very loud.

"Don Emanuel," I said, "what will your congregation think?"

"They!" he replied at the top of his voice. "They are beasts, pigs, and are all doomed to perdition as Indian idolators. Machitos, I wish to speak with you."

We went inside, and he followed. When safely anchored upon a smoothed cedar "knee," which served for a chair, he said: "You gave a ball, machitos, up there, over the gold mountains?" We nodded. "There was present a young girl, *muy linda*, very beautiful, a Metsiza witch, a limb of the devil, with black hair reaching to her feet, eyes like mirrors, and mouth like a purple fruit, the loveliest girl in the five republics! Her name"——

"We recognise her," interposed my friend; "the prettiest and most virtuous creature in all your country. What of her?"

"I have spent your dollar, señores, in supplication to the saints on your behalf. May the prayer be heard!" piously continued the creature after a while.

"The prayers of a good man avail much," observed our French companion gravely.

"*A su disposicion!*" modestly replied the padre, unconscious of his sarcasm. "Did this Indian sorceress draw you into her net?"

I answered: "We fell in love with her, as should every bachelor caballero with each pretty and good girl he sees. But we did not think of taking her to our home across the ocean. Her French lover is our friend."

"Ha! Her French lover! The long-limbed heretic, the"—— A string of epithets followed.

"What do you want, Don Emanuel?" asked our companion, rising from his hammock.

"I am speaking to these noble caballeros," he retorted savagely. "They love the church, and they will hear me."

"Make haste!" we exclaimed.

"You are rich, gentlemen, and you love the church. I have prayed for you, more than the full price of the dollar, much more. See now! That girl has bewitched me. Her face is always before me, and her voice in my ears. I never loved like this before. It is not human fascination. Caballeros, my soul will be lost because of her! Oh, sirs, have pity, and help me! Her mother is very poor. For one hundred dollars she would sell all her children. Give me the money, and I will intercede day and night for your miserable souls," he went on. A something of real pathos in the drunken wretch's prayer restrained our indignation.

"What would you do with her?" I asked.

"I would marry, and keep her with me as long as she lives.

Write down what conditions you like before the alcalde here, and I'll sign them."

"Can you not write?" asked my friend.

"O yes. I can write my name with ease—Don Emanuel Blank," he replied with dignity.

"You, a priest, marry!" we objected.

"Yes, yes; I will perform the ceremony myself at night, in the presence of the alcalde."

We knew such strange abuses obtained throughout these countries, but were amazed at his openness.

"And what is to become of our friend, her lover?"

"He will not wed her; or, if he should, when his luck changes at the diggings he will run away and leave her, as do all *machos!*" which is but too true of the wild mining population.

"This has lasted quite long enough," said our French companion. "Don Emanuel, we pity you, and for other reasons besides this infatuation for the Indian girl—reasons which you probably would not understand. It is not worth while to explain why all gentlemen would refuse your application with disgust, for that also lies beyond your comprehension. Enough to know that you weary us. The lover of that young girl you have dared to look at is my dearest friend. The cloth which removes you from the rank of common men, the cloth you disgrace and dare to outrage, will protect you from Eugène; but I am not so gentle, priest, nor so orthodox. Out of our house, traitor alike to man and heaven!" The good but rough old digger appeared almost majestic as he ordered out that poor savage creature. We did not interfere, and, growling, he slunk away, and stumbled up the street.

So it ended at that time; but six months after, lounging in the doorway of the Howard House in Colon, I saw Eugène approaching from the wharf. I seized him by the hand.

"And the other turtledove?" I said, looking round—"the little *fiancée* with whom I danced on Christmas Eve?"

He laughed hard. "I was over-weighted, compadre. My rival had the good things of heaven to offer besides those of earth. The fiancée is married long since, and her own husband read the service!"

"Ah," I exclaimed, "married to a priest! To the cura of ——?"

"To him, my friend. He bought her for eighty dollars 'strong!' They offered her to me at an advance of fifty cents! Ha, ha! And she's very happy, compadre; and I—I'm going to crack *huacos* [Indian graves] on the Chiriqui!"

THE INDIAN.

IT was very pleasant travelling we had had that day. Our route lay over level grass-lands, and along the bank of quiet streams, shaded by tall cotton-wood trees and tufty bamboos, which swayed and nodded to each other from either brink. The narrow fringe of thicket on each edge of the water did not intrude upon the meadow-land, but intersected and wound through it evenly, seeming to divide the plain with hedges planted by generations of careful husbandmen. Sometimes two brooks drew close together, and appeared to enclose within the line of their timbered banks a small green waste of grass; sometimes they diverged widely, and left a mile-long ellipse within their coil. No shrubs nor trees broke the level of these *savannahs*, except, at rare intervals, upon the rocky sides and summit of a *butte*, as are called, in Western parlance, those abrupt, clear-cut out-croppings of granite which rise, steep as a castle wall in ruins, from the flat surface of the soil. A charming feature of the landscape are such precipitous hillocks, clothed with a trailing garment of parasites, and crowned with trees that never cease to wave and shiver, though the air be still and hot as a plague-fog below. Very charming indeed they seemed to us, who, for the last three days, had been toiling across a land that appears to have been once a seething lake, petrified into granite when its bubbles rose thickest. That such was the formation of the region we had passed lately, is not altogether untrue, and no other description could give the reader understanding of the scenery through which we had been travelling along the north-eastern shore of Lake Nicaragua.

Doubly agreeable, then, to us was the change to that fair meadow-land, with its abundance of leaves and constant variety; nevertheless, after a twenty-five mile march, we were not sorry to see at length a *ranche*, with a good-sized *corral* round it. For the last two or three miles' journey, the encounter of scattered groups of cattle and horses had prepared us for the sight of this habitation in the wilderness.

The hut and its palisaded stock-yard stood in the bend of a stream; three parts of the enclosed circuit lay in a delicious shadow. I halted a moment, and gazed upon the scene, delighted with its peaceful loveliness. That gray-thatched dwelling, so still, so holy in repose, beneath the shelter of its big deep trees, impressed me once again with a nameless longing, often as I had beheld such deceitful visions of sweet peace in that enchanted land. The hushed, blank pause of Nature, listless and worn out with the morning heat, lay heavily on the place. No wind stirred. The faint pale wreaths of smoke rising through the thatch scarce showed themselves, save by a dizzy motion of the air. Lazily fluttered the butterflies among the purple *grenadita* flowers by the door. Lazily chirped the "honey-birds" seated on the leaves around a ripe *papya*. A golden-throated jewel, balanced on wings of azure, buzzed lightly up and down among the yellow blossoms of a monster cactus. But Nature was not dead. From time to time, the deep-drawn sigh that swells from one knows not where, from the bosom of the earth perhaps, or from the glittering, restless air, we cannot tell, passed across the scene. Then leaves tremble and shake; then birds flutter; and in an instant it has gone by, as though great Pan had turned himself in dreaming, and dozed off again.

We jumped our mules over the yard-high bar that fenced the cattle-pen from the dwelling-place. A dozen lean and surly curs rushed at us open-mouthed; the mules screamed and kicked; we shouted. Startled by a hullabaloo unusual in that green solitude, an old woman rushed from a little cooking-hut

beside the dwelling-house. At sight of her, we turned suddenly in our saddles, and looked aside; at sight of us, the venerable dame squeaked shrilly, and disappeared; for, supposing that her visitors could only be Indian *vaqueros*, she had not troubled to put on the out-door dress which even Creole decency requires upon a lady's shoulders when in company of Creoles. A moment after, she emerged again, clad in snowy camice and petticoat of cotton-print, and stood at a distance regarding us, while a yellow-faced damsel behind peeped round her tawny neck. We whipped off the dogs, and dismounted; entered a sort of wicker-work portico hung round with hollow logs, in which bees were busily at work upon their combs; and sat down. The old woman followed us in timidly, and the young one hung on to her, clutching a fold of the maternal petticoat. "We want to see your husband, señora," we said; and the matron turned without a word, her daughter turning with her—finger to mouth, and head over shoulder. But before two steps were taken, it occurred to the younger lady that she was absolutely exposed to the eyes of unknown persons, white of complexion, and male by sex. She was dressed as decorously as any lady need be; it was the thought of being scrutinised by strange eyes—the morbidity of self-consciousness always present to the savage, whether in lands civilised or barbarous—that caused this young girl to scream shrilly, and hustle her mother through the door with indecent haste. The first uncontrollable impulse of curiosity gone by, she fled from our eyes, and appeared no more, poor creature, until night shielded her from examination. Such is the nature of the savage generally, when he has been so far acquainted, traditionally perhaps, with the superiority of civilised life as to suspect the value of that assumption which, in the first instance, he will always claim over his visitor.

We sat and smoked a while in the portico; the bees buzzed inquisitively round us, then returned to their occupations in the hives without. At the end of an hour, during which not one of

the dwellers on the little *hacienda* came to disturb us, a thunderous tramp and clamour hard by broke our meditations. We ran out, rifle in hand; and then a stirring scene met our eyes. The corral, as I have said, lay in the bend of a stream, and the savannah sloped out on either side, like the legs of a compass. All the space for half a mile beyond was dotted with groups of scarce tamed oxen, wild mustangs, and furious, obstinate mules. The field, if I may call it so, was alive with cattle, dashing this way and that, bellowing, raging to escape. The horses, more intelligent, seemed to be rather playing at fright; but the oxen and mules were simply mad with anger and fear. Foaming, tossing, tearing up the turf with hoof and horn, they scurried over the meadow, now massing up in great herds, now separating into groups that dashed to and fro, and engaged in momentary but not bloodless conflict. In a moment more, as we stood watching, the cause of this invasion became evident. Five or six vaqueros—half-naked Indians upon half-wild horses—came into sight at the tail of the herds. Galloping here and there, hallooing and screaming always, striking this bull with the ring-end of their lasso, and cutting, almost simultaneously, that big *macho* across the flanks with their cow-hide, they dashed onwards, driving all the maddened herd before their course, doubling, twisting, yelling, spurring this way and that, striking here and there and everywhere, enveloped in a swirl of dust, shrilly laughing, and seeming, not to the cattle only, but to us, a wild and desperate chorus of demons pursuing their prey. Onward and onward, nearer and nearer, the wild chase swept, and so quickly did it approach that we had barely time to fix the stout bars in their places when a mighty bull, snow-white and glossy as a well-groomed horse, though drenched in sweat, charged full through the first entrance to the gap at which we had been standing. His ponderous head struck the lower rail, and all the strong fence rang again with the vibration of the blow. He fell to the ground like a tower falling, and so lay, apparently dead, for half an hour

afterwards. One after another, the leading bulls butted either at the bars or at their prostrate comrade, but at length all were driven inside. For a while they raced thundering round, then gradually reconciled themselves to the position.

Five minutes after, an aged Indian, naked save for his breech-clout, came to the doorway, and stood gazing at us with small, shiny eyes. The sun was setting behind him; the purple flowers and clustering leaves of the grenadita, burnished in the level rays, made a lurid frame to his dark figure. The old man was very tall, thin, and wiry. Heavy tresses of dank hair hung over a forehead seamed with wrinkles. The little glassy eyes protruded over the level of his nose, which, short and distended at the nostrils, overhung a mouth wide, thin, and very rudely modelled. The cheek-bones were exceedingly high; the teeth, in spite of a great age, perfectly beautiful. It was a typical face: very valuable to the ethnologist, as showing in one instance all the peculiarities of feature that distinguish the Indian races of Central America. I do not mean that all the aborigines are as ugly as this old man, but in him was seen emphatically expressed the national type in its every line.

He stood and stared. We addressed him on the subject of our visit, which it is not necessary to explain here. He answered in slow monosyllables, uttered with that listless melancholy of tone that all his people use—a melancholy that so many hundred years of cruel serfdom have impressed upon the race. His manner was not uncourteous, only indifferent; and shy perhaps, in a sad way. He silently obeyed our wishes, and his wife bustled round to make us as comfortable as the means of the place permitted.

We stayed the night. After supper, when the whisky flasks were placed upon a board, and a long thin taper of beef-fat made visible the darkness of the shed: when the night-jars began to scream and circle over the meadows outside, the wild-dogs to howl, and giant bats to flitter round the trees; when the stillness

of night settled down, and the trampling cattle ceased their noise —then the old Indian, under the influence of our potent drinks, changed his nature. The little eyes, always bright, though in a still, *shining* fashion, almost sparkled. The long hair was thrown back, and we could observe that no mean space of forehead underlay it. The old man straightened himself, spoke in longer sentences, and almost with animation. The spirit, that crafty foe which seems at first to be a benevolent fairy, had done its witching, and transformed the man.

Upon his small and finely-formed hand, never distorted by heavier labour than the bearing of a whip or a lasso, was an antique ring, with a fine emerald in its setting. Such luxury did not surprise us, for we knew the *haciendero* must be rich—for his country and wants, that is. I asked twice to be allowed to see the jewel, but he only stared blankly and made no answer. I did not press the matter; but one of our servants was less scrupulous. Laughing, with good-humoured rudeness he seized the Indian's hand, and held it out to me. As the old man made no resistance, I glanced at the ring, and perceived at once that it was very valuable, and grotesque in fashion. Two nameless creatures, with four legs and no head, held the stone between their paws. The workmanship seemed to be very rude, but perhaps long wear had altered its first beauty. The monsters were smoothed down quite flat and bare with friction, and so ancient appeared the jewel, that I thought it possible their heads had been rubbed completely off. "Where did you get this from?" I asked. The old fellow muttered something, and was silent. The woman said a few words to him in *patois*, and received an answer in the same unintelligible speech. He continued to drink, drink, long after we had rolled ourselves up upon the earthen floor and gone to sleep. I heard his monotonous voice in waking intervals, holding forth at an incredible length to our servants. And in the morning they told us a strange tale. Continually urged on by his wife, and deceived by the air of

interest and credulity assumed by our head *mozo*, who was mocking him all the time with the insolence of a savage semi-civilised, the Indian was led on to speak of things which, in his sober moments, he had rather died than tell of.

According to our host's story, the spot on which stood his dwelling was once the site of a great palace, from which a princess ruled the entire country round from the lake to Mosquito. Her wealth, her power, were enormous. When the Spaniards came to the country, this sovereign—I did not understand whether it was one individual of whom the whole legend was told, or whether the realm descended always by the female line—sent ten thousand soldiers, equipped with golden breastplates,* to the great battle near Leon, in which Gil Gonzales had so narrow an escape from annihilation. She made yet another brave stand against the invaders in the pleasant fields around her palace; was again defeated, of course; and she with all her noble family became slaves in the home of their conquerors, who razed her dwelling to the ground; but not before the heroic sovereign had found time to conceal her treasures in a spot which no human being has yet been able to discover. At this point of the narrative, the old woman broke in with a declaration that her husband was a lineal descendant of the princess, and knew the whereabouts of the hidden store. This statement she repeated vociferously, and challenged the old man to deny that only a few years since he had taken from the treasure that emerald ring I had admired. He did not deny either one fact or the other, but did not admit them. Passing over the point, he indulged in highly coloured descriptions of the wealth and greatness that his ancestors had enjoyed, hinting without much circumlocution that such halcyon times were once more about to dawn for the Indian, long oppressed and neglected.

This was, in brief, the extraordinary tale told me next morning.

* The fact of golden breastplates and arms being extensively used in the Central American armies, is noted by Herrera.

I offered extravagant terms to the old man for a mere sight of the princess's treasure, but, after a whole day's hesitation, broken with curious events that I have not time to relate, he finally refused to give me a glimpse of them. And so my story has not the conclusion I and my readers would wish it to have found, and I can class my Indian host not as the most valuable contributor to scientific research that we have seen these many years, but only as the last of "Savages I have known."

PHIL DEATH, OF SANTA MARTA, ROWDY.

YES, sir!" replied the Purser, as we lounged on the quarter-deck of the *New Mexico*, "it's not to be gainsayed we're a kinder mixed lot aboard these steamers mostly! If it wasn't for the Nicaraguan Transit Company, which works a mite cheaper than nothing, and thereby gets almost all the rowdy traffic between California and New York, we'd have to turn our forehold into a permanent Assize Court, with judge and jury sitting day and night, and Jack Ketch always on hand.

"As it is, we get along smoothly enough in a general way. There's most always characters aboard as would seem strange to you, but they don't give much trouble. D'ye see that milky-faced lamb of respectability exchanging his valuable ideas agin those of a poll parrot? He was the boss-husband of them Free-loving fools that went out to Nicaragua some ten years since, and he's now a cold-water doctor in San Francisco. The old lady in red took her stand on the Incurable Lunatic platform last fall, and ran for Congress; she's just come back from a lengthened visit to her constituents;—they live in a big house, with something pretty in ironwork all round it. The Yankee talking to her is a judge somewhere up Colorado way, and is noted in them parts for his singular cuteness when sober, and his cute singularities when tight; they say he never executed a man, and never reprieved a bottle. The young thing in ringlets——My! durn my old carcass from beard to boots! Scalp this here head, and

show me round as a bald nigger in a bad scare!—D'ye see him, sir? That pale man just come up the fore-companion! That's Phil D. Heath, of Santa Marta; Phil Death they call him! How did he come on board? There's no such name down in my list! Lord, Lord! if the weather comes on bad, the men 'll throw him overboard, like Jonah, sure as there's a rope waiting for the poor cuss at San Francisco! What in thunder shall we do now? D'ye note how they're drawing off forrard, and staring and muttering together? Oh Lord o' Mercy, I must find the Cap'n!" and in spite of my attempt to detain him, the Purser hurried off.

I looked at the man who caused such excitement. He was tall, but not remarkable in figure. His dress had the character usual with diggers in the realms of civilisation:—black dress-coat, black trousers, and velvet waistcoat; hat and boots new, and very glossy. His features were good, somewhat delicate in shape, of the type conventionally known as aristocratic. A short, crisp beard covered all the lower half of his face. His eyes—handsome eyes they were—had a strange expression; sad, almost soft, yet fiercely defiant when they met another's gaze; and all the face had one deathly, waxen tone. It was not the pallor of a young poet's melancholy, nor the unwholesome complexion of asceticism, nor the colourlessness of a weak constitution. Its unearthly whiteness had another cause, to be traced in those dark circles round the eyes, and that redness of the mouth. It was the whiteness that unremitted, desperate, savage debauchery brings with it to those more nervous natures which resist the uglier symptoms of corruption. On the whole, this unwelcome passenger impressed me by no means favourably; but no one could have pronounced his appearance commonplace, or failed to experience some curiosity in looking on that corpse-like face, and meeting those eager, dangerous eyes.

The Purser came back, looking much relieved. In answer to my inquiries, I learned that the Captain was already aware what

manner of guest had embarked upon his steamer; but I also gathered that he looked upon Mr. Heath with no more favour than did others.

"Perhaps he means to give him up at Panama," whispered the Purser.

"Give him up!" I exclaimed. "What for?"

"That last 'difficulty' up by Santa Clasta. There's a reward of five hundred dollars on him!"

"A shooting 'difficulty?' I asked, somewhat startled. "Is he a murderer?"

"Hush, hush, sir!" eagerly muttered the Purser. Then, after a pause, he added doubtfully, "We'd best go and speak to him, I guess."

The officer, an easy-going little man—no hero, I should think—looked at me, and I laughingly said—

"Of course! It is the first time, and perhaps the last, that I shall have the chance of conversing with a man whose words must be worth sterling coin, seeing his throat is valued at such a price. Let us go!"

With no small hesitation, the Purser moved forwards, conning, as I could see, a little speech suitable to the occasion. When we were a couple of yards from him, Mr. Heath turned abruptly, and fixed us with his dark and troubled eyes. It was the movement and the look of a hunted animal.

"Good-day, Phil!" exclaimed the Purser cheerfully, but omitting that universal ceremony of the States—the hand-shake.

Phil answered with a haughty nod, keeping his fingers deep-buried in his trousers' pockets.

There was a moment's pause, while Phil surveyed me with studied insolence. Then the Purser said uncomfortably—

"We shall have a nice run to Istapa, if this wind holds. Perhaps you're going ashore there?"

"Ain't I just slipped the rope at San Francisco? I've a deal to repent of," and he laughed scornfully.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled the Purser, "Istapa is a dull place; oh yes, I see the joke! Very good, indeed!"

"Perhaps Mr. Heath knows the town?" I ventured to remark. "I am going there myself."

"Are you?" returned the gentleman. "And is it your present intention to go all the way aboard this ship, or would you prefer the short cut by water?"

"Aboard this ship I intend to go!" I said firmly, recognising the wild threat in Heath's eyes.

"Then mind your own business, an' ask no questions, or you'll find yourself prematurely in —— before you're due at Istapa!" cried the maniac.

I made an angry gesture; Heath stared in amaze.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"You're a convicted murderer, I know that!" I cried.

He stood unmoved.

"A bully!" He winced a little.

"A coward!"

At the last epithet, Phil Death broke into a peal of sardonic laughter.

"No, sir! you're wrong there. A murderer they say I am, an' maybe they tell truth! A bully I am, for a man must live; but a coward! There's many good fellows as I hope you'll meet some day in Paradise, who'll give me a good word for that matter anyhow!"

Such was my introduction to one of the most noted rowdies of California. The Purser told me his story. I wondered and shuddered. But we parted without further intercourse at Istapa, and in the wild forests of Guatemala my recollection of this strange man and his strange career faded gradually out of mind.

It was three years afterwards that I landed at Aspinwall, having run down the coast in a small boat from the Costa Rican harbour of Limon. I found the little town—city the in-dwellers call it—in a state of such confusion, that I at once concluded an earthquake

had recently passed beneath it; to one coming from the restless, troubled lands north and south of peaceful Aspinwall, any commotion is at once suggestive of volcanic agencies in some shape. But I was wrong. An earthquake had indeed passed through the town two days before, but an earthquake caused by man's carelessness and criminal folly, not by the unseen, irresistible forces of the inner fire.

The story of that catastrophe, which almost ruined Aspinwall, in the spring of 1866, is doubtless fresh in many memories. When I arrived, the first horror of it had scarcely begun to subside. Three great iron warehouses, which were pointed out as among the trophies of American engineering, lay in a shapeless heap upon the sand. The railway was torn up, the harbour thick with shattered timbers, and the coast, up to the forest wall, piled with wreck. The long, single street of bars, hotels, and billiard-rooms which lines the shore was windowless and doorless. Shingles had fallen from roof and wall; the roadway was blocked with rubbish. Negro carpenters were busy at the work of restoration, perched on ladders, clinging to sash-frames, creeping along naked rafters. The din of their unctuous voices descended from aloft, while, on the ground below, anxious proprietors swore and ordered, directed and swore, expostulated with oaths and explained with blasphemy. The "ti kainon" folks had a gay time of it. Never was such an opportunity for gossip in the little town, used as it is to war and murder and pestilence. Some stood and stared, and commented in awe upon the history of those dark stains and splashes on the white-painted walls. Others climbed warily about the hill of bent and tortured girders which alone showed where had stood the lofty warehouses. Some took their stand upon the edge of the broken pier, and loudly argued on the cause of this overwhelming disaster; for as yet no one had a clear idea what was the meaning of it. Nitro-glycerine was a new word in 1866, and the most amazing theories were extant as to its composition, its use, and possible abuse. People have

learnt something of these matters since, thanks to the horrible affair at Aspinwall, and more lately at other places; but it was not yet even known what was the agent which had wrought such direful mischief. One may, however, hazard an opinion not too improbable, that within few years not a child in arms throughout the world but will have learnt, by family experience, what, and how deadly, is the nature of this preparation.

Would it be worth while briefly to tell the story of the Aspinwall disaster? How sixteen honest fellows—by the numbers given me on the spot—were unloading a vessel by the pier; how they safely brought up from its hold cask after cask of some heavy substance, not labelled dangerous, nor in any way warning them to have special care; how one, laughing with a comrade, suffered the barrel in his charge to fall heavily on the deck; and how, on the instant, quick as the flash which accompanied the fall, roof and girder, wall and floor, of the vast storehouse hard by crashed in; how the flames burst out from stem to stern of the vessel; how men's limbs and heads and carcases whirled like shot across the street two hundred yards away, and affixed themselves, flat, horrible, upon the town walls; how that white burst of fire again and again parted the red flames of the vessel, adding ruin to ruin, spreading desolation farther and farther; how a brave English captain lashed his vessel to the death-dealing craft, and towed her out into the bay, while explosion after explosion broke from her hold, stunning and killing his men and firing his own rigging; how he persevered, and at length, with one broadside, sank the monstrous cargo in the ocean. It is not worth while to repeat all this in detail, but it may be well to remind our legislators, while yet the 1868 catastrophe at Abergele is in men's minds, that warning was given them at Aspinwall in 1866.

I landed beside the shattered pier, looked with awe and amazement upon the mountainous ruin—where a few dauntless spirits were already planning fresh triumphs of the engineering art—and hastened to the Howard House. There I heard the tale, sur-

rounded in the bar itself with those evident proofs which give substance to a marvellous story. Over the barman's head—a keen, olive-toned, well-greased head it was—a dark, round stain upon the wall showed itself through a hasty dab of whitewash.

"When the crash came, I fell backwards, nigh stunned!" says the barman. "But," he adds in a half-whisper, "I heerd *it* hurtle above my head clear enough. It 'swished' through the air like a shell, and for the moment, being in a manner 'mazed, I thought myself at Fort Donelson agin, with the Yankee bullets a tearin' an' whizzin' overhead. It struck the wall that hard, the bone split the wood—see it there—and stuck straight out, the fist clenched, the elbow bent up, just for the world like a gold-beater's sign. Eh, but 'twas horrid to take it down! We was obliged to *wrench* at it, and there wasn't even a nigger nor an Ind'an in the town as would try twice. Phil Death showed us the trick of it at last. 'Let the poor thing grow stiff,' he says, and walked out. So we hung a cloth over it, and in an hour or two it come off easy enough."

"Phil Death of Santa Marta?" I asked, remembering my acquaintance of the *New Mexico.*

"That there man! Did you know him? He's kinder changed greatly. Reads Scriptur', and keeps a bar down below, and is otherwise a Christ'an character, for a white man. He's built a turtle-pond, has Phil, and expects to do trade in them there quadrupeds. He won't make much of 'em, it's my idee; but the thing's handy to try. What a white man wants is a industry! When it comes to fattening beasts and tendin' of 'em, whether pigs, or squirrels, or turtle, yer nigger will give him time, and pains, and money, and beat him easy. Because why? I reckon a nigger is nearer kin to brute beasts, and they know it, and won't spite him, as they will white folks. Now, I'd a turtle once—a pretty turtle he were, with good feelin's, as I thought, and I kinder loved him. I did trade for that cretur' with an English cap'n as desired to have him for his wife's breakfast, and I went

down to my pond behind here, and I caught my turtle. Durned if he hadn't developed the green mould all over his shell in that there night!—I set him free, and bought another or two to rub agin him and cure his hide. After awhile he grew brighter, and kept on growin' so, until I said to myself, 'Quicken these old eyes, but my turtle's shell is more'n a sample!' So I looked up a kind of a dunderheaded trader and took him down to the tank.

"'Burn yer copper-coloured face to salt and sugar,' says I, 'did ye ever see a Ceylon turtle of a finer shell than that?'

"'Where?' says he.

"'In the trap there, squeeze me!' says I.

"'I see a durnation ole land tortus, mighty sick, and considerable sufferin',' says he.

"I looked agin. There was my turtle, sir, a lyin' dry at the bottom, with his superfine shell cracked in a dozen holes, and his durned ole head a starin' up at me as wicked as a pious man in a corner. 'I give up that idee,' I says.

"Well, I bought six she turtles, and I turned 'em loose. They laid eggs, and eggs, and eggs! Says I, 'Here's a fortune!' Maybe there was, but meanwhile there was my buck turtle also. The females, they laid eggs, and the buck, he ate 'em! ate 'em faster than they was laid, for, gettin' kinder impatient one day, he ate up females, eggs and all. I said, 'This ain't no fair trade, seein' the honesty's al' o' one side;' and I ain't meddled with turtles since. But there's folks as has faith hereabouts, and Phil Death is one of 'em. He's going to edicate this quadruped, and I tell you, sir, seein' as you knew him in old times, when he was a different man, not regenerate and that—I tell you, there ain't a soul in Aspinwall, whether turtle-breeder or no, as don't wish him all success, with a less gift of Scriptur'." My friend the barman ceased at length, and turned to his legitimate business of mixing cocktails, brandy smashes, and gin slings.

I went out from the Howard House, and turned along the street in search of Phil Death's bar. It was, as I have said, only

two days after the catastrophe which laid Aspinwall in ruins, and the enlightened Government of New Granada had of course taken the opportunity to turn its soldiery upon the town. I do not profess to understand the Government of New Granada, still less to comprehend the war department of that Government. It might be for logical reasons, or reasons philanthropical, that the wild Indian soldiery were detailed for service in the town of Aspinwall, just at the very moment when they could be fairly expected to enter in collision with the interests or the prejudices of the townsmen. I give no opinion about this. But, having observed the general conduct of the Government of New Granada, I am persuaded that neither theory nor expediency is the least regarded in the matter.

New Granada, having in a weak moment admitted the existence of a civilised community in its midst, having too late discovered that the success, the freedom, the intelligence of Aspinwall, is a standing reproach to its own self, its aims, means, and doings—takes every opportunity of reminding the unfortunate dwellers in that town that, proud and energetic as they may be, their mere existence depends on the goodwill and forbearance of a drove—a senseless, brutal mob—of Indian soldiery; and, to impress this knowledge deeply in the minds of every wretched white man in Aspinwall, the Government of New Granada post sentries up and down the streets whenever an unusual excitement might be expected, as, for instance, when a mail comes in or goes out, when an earthquake happens, and at similar moments.

Naturally, then, the soldiers were in great force after the explosion. Two Indians, half naked, but with polished rifles and bayonets fixed, kept guard at the door of the Howard House, with what aim or object no intelligent being could guess. I passed out between the worthy pair, and they scowled after their manner, but said nothing. I turned to my left, along the rough colonnade which fronts the street. Very unusually busy was the town—masons, carpenters, gossips, thronged the narrow way; whilst, in

the thickest crush, stunted Indians and mestizos, barefooted, ferocious, unwashed, wild-eyed, uncombed—in a word, savage—stood leaning on their rifles, or lounged insolently upon the bales of merchandise and heaps of rubbish. Already, as I could tell by the sullen murmurs of the soldiery, and the angry chatter of the negroes, sharp words had passed between the working folks and their barbarous protectors. There was danger in the air.

But a little thing is needed to provoke a fray in Aspinwall when the soldiers are about, and scarce a month passes without some bloody outbreak, such as resulted in that pre-eminent outrage called the Panama massacre ten years since. Thus is the natural enmity of civilisation and savagery kept up and fostered.

Were it possible that a word of mine could catch the eye of the New Granadan grandees in some interval of their very active lives, in some momentary pause between the last revolution and the next pronunciamiento, I would ask them to look carefully into this matter of their military system. I would ask three questions: First, is it a notorious fact, that the perpetual "difficulties" which dissolve themselves by blood in Aspinwall are principally caused by their own troops? Secondly, would it be impossible to enlist more civilised and less insolent soldiers for that garrison? Thirdly, is there any occasion at all for troops? I know that I myself, a peaceable man pre-eminently, have felt all my "black" blood rise in meeting the studiously offensive stare of these ugly Indians, and how much more irritating must that provocation be to the high-spirited and unbridled citizens of the States? But words are thrown away upon the authorities of New Granada! I say no more.

Phil Death's store and bar was situated almost at the end of the street. I entered. The place was neat as a Dutch housewife's, and this fact did not surprise me; for, even in his rowdy days, Mr. Heath wore an air of elegance. The master was standing behind his bar-counter, clad in snowy "drill," with a broad-brimmed "Panama" upon his head. The expression of

his face had changed, and not, I think, in the judgment of an artist, for the better. The old look of defiance was gone, but in its place had come an air of humility, which sat badly—unnaturally, as it were—upon his keen, bold features. Yet was there no hypocrisy in Phil Death. One could not doubt but he was sincere now as formerly. The pallor remained, deathly and awful.

I stepped forward and offered my hand.

"I'm glad to see you again, Mr. B.," said Phil calmly, recognising me at a glance.

"Won't you shake hands, then?"

"No, sir! There was the time when no man would shake hands with me, an' I've not yet washed mine clean. I take no man's hand, until the Lord has lifted me. Come that day! come that day!" he muttered to himself. "Will ye take a drink, sir?"

I accepted, and the quondam rowdy set himself to mix a compound.

"You are changed greatly, Heath, I hear?"

"I've been spared," he said thoughtfully, pouring an ingredient drop by drop—"I've been spared mirac'lous. And wherefore? I wasn't fit to die, but, by human judgment, I wasn't fit to live. Why was it done so, then? There's scarce one of them this hand has sent to sudden judgment but had showed himself a better man than I before the Lord! Eh, sir, the question withers me! I sit an' sit, thinking, but the truth ain't clear."

"Well, Heath," I said, "you try to do your duty, I've no doubt. There must be many of your old class here."

"Yes, sir, there's a many. I talk to 'em, and when the spirit's strong upon me, I hold forth—here's your cocktail, sir! It's pleasant to a regenerate like me to observe the ways of righteousness on the spread. The folks about here don't swear near so loud as they did; and, I tell you, there's a heap more trade in sweet drinks than there used to be. That looks well, don't it? But it's not that as I was saved for, I guess." He

indulged in a quaint rhapsody, wherein I could trace a mingling of the old defiant strength with the new feelings. Then he asked abruptly, "What's your idea, sir?"

"My idea is that you were a great criminal, Mr. Heath, and that you have been most mercifully saved for repentance. I don't know more, and I don't inquire. You may be fated to do a great deed or not; to die in some heroic act, or to perish in the common way. A man, as you should know well, is no such great account, nor does his life nor his death convulse the universe. Look on your preservation thus far as a grace, nor strain your fancy to make theories on a scheme beyond human comprehension. Let me predict! You will die in your bed, a respected and wealthy citizen of Aspinwall!"

"No, sir! That can't be so. I'll not die in my bed—it can't be—when there's so many up above crying out upon me! Now what in thunder is the noise about?"

While we were talking, the commotion outside had greatly increased. We heard all the while the harsh and grating voices of the soldiery raised high, the eager but fat negro tones, threatening *quand même*, and one shriller note, apparently in expostulation, which could only belong to a child. When Heath interrupted himself, the conflicting voices had arisen to a pitch which unmistakably announced a row—"muss," they call it in Aspinwall. We strolled out, Heath leisurely taking his revolver from its place, as by instinct.

In the colonnade without, a group of excited men, mostly negroes, were surging up and down; but one or two whites showed themselves in the crowd. All made way for Heath; "regenerate" though he was, the old reputation served him, and Phil Death was too much used to be received as a king of rowdies to note this sign of allegiance from his subjects.

"What in thunder's this muss?" he asked; and a dozen eager voices told us one side at least of the story.

A mulatto boy, it seemed, had offered to sell shaddocks—

"pomalos," as they call them there—to one of the New Granadan officers. The military gentleman, neither accepting nor refusing had walked up the street "chaffing" with the child. This is a favourite amusement of the class, whether in England or Aspinwall, and no objection can be taken to it when the gentleman enters the lists on fair and equal terms with his antagonist. But on this occasion the military person found himself overmatched. Like most of his blood, the small mulatto had a biting tongue, and seemed besides to be singularly conversant with the officer's private affairs—family, amatory, and other. The gentleman lost temper and then lost head. Irritated by some stinging rejoinder of the boy, he suddenly demanded his papers—his licence to hawk fruit, as I understood. This document, whatever it may have been, the child was unable or unwilling to produce, and the officer gave him in charge to a sentry. The Indian seized his prisoner with unnecessary rudeness, and the child began to cry. His mother, or some negro woman acting in that capacity, came up, and loudly expostulated. The officer vociferated his orders, the sentry ruthlessly obeyed, and the mulatto boy and his mother continued their outcry. Hence the crowd, and hence the "muss." It had not yet reached the "difficulty" point when we arrived, but the colonnade was already blocked, and the sentries at a stand-still. Phil Death was eagerly appealed to as arbitrator. Even the Indians paused in their dangerous task to hear what opinion would be given by a person of such just eminence as the hero of Santa Marta. He, the hero, showed himself truly great. He patted the pretty boy's head, majestically silenced the mother, and said to the soldiers in broken Spanish—

"Let the boy go!"

They seemed half inclined to obey, but the officer, drawing courage and insolence from the accession of two or three more Indians, with bayonets fixed, who came up at this moment, savagely repeated his directions. So great ascendency does the reputation of dauntless courage carry with it in semi-civilized

communities, that even now the armed Indians hesitated to use force against their antagonist. Phil eagerly took advantage of the moment—

"Listen to me, sir!" he exclaimed; "I'm peaceable, I am! There ain't no more peaceable cretur round about, outside of a turtle pond! Hear what I've got to say, caballero, an' don't be hasty. This here boy he's done no harm, and his father, old Pepe, is a down-right 'ugly mug,' I tell you, when he's got a notion there's wrong done him. Now he's my dear friend, caballero, and so's this little colt. I'd be loathe to see harm done 'em, seeing they're kinder almighty precious to me. Listen to me, Cap'n! Come into my bar, an' let's take a drink together. There's many a difficulty I've crept out of in latter years with just a thimbleful of Bourbon an' a drop of 'Angostura'—"

At this moment a tall white man crushed through the mob, and passionately demanded what, in a blasphemy, they Ind'an coyotes was doing with his Pepe?

"Go slow, go slow, boy!" cried Phil, anxiously. "Lie by awhile—I'm just a fixng of it friendly like with the cap'n. Now come an' take that there drink, caballero! Don't you mistake any! Old Pepe here has the black drop in his veins, and he's mortal fond of his boy. Don't make any misconception. If you don't let that child go, you'll jest hev' the durnedest muss in about the rattling of an airthquake as ever was seen in Aspinwall! Don't rise him, Cap'n, don't! And don't rise me!"

"Take the little nigger to the guard-house!" shouted the officer. "Clear the path, filibusters!"

I saw the sudden flush leap to Phil's forehead as the Indians moved threateningly towards him. Calm natures, smoothed and worn with civilization, generally work themselves to passion by degrees, but the untutored man, whether clad in feathers or broadcloth, is apt to pass in a pulse-beat from comparative composure to the deadliest rage. Beware of those whose eyes flame out on a sudden! They may appear sane and reasonable enough, but

not the less is that faint trace of dementia which Phil called the "black drop" lurking in their veins. Yet I could see that the quondam rowdy struggled with his rising passion. He took the elder Pepe by the arm, and strove to quiet him. But one of the Indians so brutally squeezed the child's wrist as to call forth a wail of pain. The father sprang forward, and, as he moved, a soldier in the rear raised the but of his rifle, and felled him to the ground.

Phil gave voice to a yell of fury. Quick as light he strode across the body of his friend, and fired right and left. The Indian who held the child, dropped. I seized little Pepe, and drew him into the bar. At the same instant a soldier raised his rifle, and fired point blank at Phil. The latter sprang aside, and the bullet shivered on the upraised weapon of a comrade in the rear—glanced off in fragments, and wounded the officer in his arm. A white man came dashing up the sandy roadway, revolver in hand, and, by accident or wilfully, fired at Phil. The bullet passed between us. A negro drew his bowie, and darted at the new assailant. A soldier, mad or drunk with fear, shot the negro down. And then—

The tongue of Homer could not describe the scene that followed. I had gathered some experience of free fights, but that fray showed me I was yet a novice. There were perhaps some five-and-twenty men present, whites, Indians, and negroes. There may have been private enmities among them, which induced the monomachiæ, but I saw no sign of deliberate purpose. There may have been concert among certain individuals, with an object to gain, but if so, the secret was well kept. To my eyes the fray appeared a mere struggle of madmen, drunk with blood, and phrensied for slaughter. No one singled out another. They rushed together man to man, they closed, and fought to death. The noise!—bellowing of rage, crack-crack-crack of revolvers, trampling of feet swift to shed blood, sharp outcry of pain, moans of the fallen—and over all a tempestuous roar of oaths! The

sight!—staggering men, wounded to death for a cause unknown, blood creeping through the thirsty sand! demoniacs, foaming, screaming, fighting, leaning against pillars to recover breath for a new struggle! Dust and smoke whirled up and round the awful scene like a curtain, breaking its wreaths here and there to let some poor wretch crawl out—perhaps to die! The yellow tropical sunshine was obscured, the blue bay shut out, the palm stems and verdant shrubs lining the road were all unseen through that sickly pall. Nothing of gay and brilliant Nature could be discerned—nothing of heaven or earth; only that dance of death on the yellow sand!

After the first shot Phil Death's eyes opened wide, his nostrils dilated. But in a moment he recovered his better self; he threw down his revolver; he rushed into the midst—

"Don't, boys! For the love of Heaven! Oh, Lord! this is the grandest muss! Don't, don't! Would yer, yer greasy-lipped son of a bleached congo! Hiram, boy, stop it! As you've immortal souls, men, drop yer tools, an' take a drink! It's enough! I, Phil Death, as have fought from the mountains to sundown, I say it's enough! Lord, lord! An' I the cause of it! Sure as there's a day of judgment for us all, if you don't drop yer hands, I'll 'go in!'—ah!"—he fell face downwards into the thickest crush, and so close were the combatants bound together, that, for an instant, Death was supported on their struggling limbs. Then he dropped headlong.

The fall of a champion so noted produced effect where the voice of an angel must have failed. The maddened men drew apart. A few random shots echoed in the sudden stillness; then the late foes stood and looked at one another. Not a few bodies lay outstretched upon the sand, but most of them were unhurt. One by one these arose, and only remained the dead or the desperately wounded. Of the latter there were two.

We gathered round Phil Death. The bullet that struck him down had entered between the shoulder blades, and at a glance

experienced men whispered their hopeless verdict—"Sodger's bullet, too!" they murmured, with a vengeful look at the Indians still around.

We took Phil up, and carried him within.

"On the bar counter," he muttered; "I'm used to sleeping there!" (I thought that quietly-uttered sentence worthy of Seneca). We laid him down, and he remained awhile with eyes closed. A doctor was fetched in haste from the neighbouring bar, where he sat waiting for his part in the bloody play. "It ain't no use, Joe!" said the patient, in a stronger voice—"I'm gone! But, Joe! Joe! Durn me if that wasn't the grandest muss, for the while it lasted, ever you see——! The Lord forgive me!" He remained silent for a little, and then said, quite cheerfully—"Good-bye, boys! Phil Death's goin' before the great Vigilance Committee, where he'll have no need to speak agin' the charge, nor fear false verdict. He'll fold his hands meek, an' bear it like a man! I've been a right-down sinner, boys, but not that bad as they made me out. No, I han't, by the Etarnal! I've hopes there's mercy up aloft, where things is known—the truth of 'em! I never stole a hoss, nor painted my face!* I'd ha' lived as quiet an' God-fearing as any man in Massoorah, if it hadn't ha' bin for the devil an' temptation! But she was beautiful—ay, so beautiful! I see—I see—!"

"'You're a coward, Phil!' she said, hissing like that. 'There's Job Leach, he's a man! ready with tongue, an' also with his hand. If ye want to hev' me, why don't ye go to Job Leach, an' tell him that secret out loud? What's the use o' whispering it in every green lane? Air ye ashamed of your fancy?'

"'I'm afeard neither of Job Leach, nor any man as handles weapon! I'd tell my choice before the folks at meeting, if it'd please you, Mary!' Ah, ah, how she larfed!

* Perhaps this requires explanation. Horse-stealing, and "renegading," —that is, joining a hostile Indian tribe—are the unpardonable sins of the Far West.

"I saddled the old hoss, an' I went into the wood. It was about sundown. The leaves was glittering, red as blood. The skies was scarlet, an' a big black cloud hung across the mountain line! I rode on, her craking larf in my ears, an' a glimmer of red everywhere before my eyes. Lord, I was innocent that day. 'Twasn't in my mind what I was goin' to do on'y I kinder went to meet Job Leach on the river path as he come from his lumber shed. Boys! I sw'ar to you I'd no thought of harm. There was nary youth in the dear old village as shamefaced as Phil Heath, nor one as the gals larfed at more free. They liked me too, the most of innocent things, children an' young gals, an' dumb animals. An' now they turn away, an' scream when they see this face as is blasted with Cain's branding. Lord, I've suffered greatly for my sin."

"Bear up, Phil," said one of the rough fellows by. "We know how you killed Job Leach."

"Ye don't, Hiram! No man living knows how that was. Give me a drink, little Pepe! Mind ye, child, if that there Ind'an coyote (as they call an officer)—burst his yellow skin!—should ever trouble yer agin, arst him what was his errand when he come loafing round my bar, 'bout two years ago, in the fall. An' show him the letter as you'll find in the safe behind there. But don't you read it, Pepe! Give me your word, as an honest little yellow cuss, never to look inside that there document, where there's things writ as it ain't fitting a boy should see! Give me another drink—Bourbon, with a drop of Angostura in it. You know how to fix my palate, Joe!

"Wal, boys, I was telling how I got tempted—I must kinder finish, for there'll be no continuation to this story. I was saying it wasn't my fault wholly! But to man's sight it was. Man's sight's nothing to me now. I'm goin', Hiram! Friends all, Phil Death's goin'. Is there any minister in the town? I'd like to see him, for this long time I've been working on my own hand, an' maybe the idea was wrong. A man ought to hev' experienced

persons with him when he strikes a new trail. There was a minister at Santa Marta, a poor, blackfaced cretur'—an' in the old village;—the Lord save us all, I never offended priest or woman knowingly! never——!" He continued to murmur for a few moments—then looked suddenly about, and resumed dreamily:

"I met him at a corner by the river bank. The stream was high, an' it raced past like a mill-sluice, turning about a load of grass, an' rolling the lumber round an' round. I met him nigh the place where I found the duck's nest with Mary; but the reeds was all drownded, or carried off by the flood. The water was red, an' its whirly ripples sparkled like fire in the low sun-rays. The forest stood on t'other hand—black an' awesome with pines an' hemlocks. The turf was flooded something. When we reined in our horses sudden, they sunk to the fetlocks, an' my ole grey, he plunged, thinking 'twas a swamp. Job Leach saw me, an' he trembled. Then I knew he was a skunk. He didn't say a word, but he outs his six-shooter. 'This ain't a dry spot for a ride,' he says, cocking the thing behind his horse's neck.

"'I han't come for a ride, Job; I'm come to tell yer something.'

"'Out with it smart, then,' says he, looking at me kinder wall-eyed.

"'I've rid out to talk about Mary. You aren't goin' to marry her, Job?'

"'Hev' ye been to the minister's to arst? Maybe ye'll pay a visit to the doctor soon, an' maybe go to see the sexton. Clear the road, Phil, for Mary's waiting of me now, I guess, down by Timbs's stream!'

"'I tell ye where I've been, Job! I've bin to see Martin of St. Louis, an' he give me news of your wife an' children.'

"He ups his six-shooter, and shoots straightway. I'd never seen a pistol fired in anger before that day. Nought was in my hand but an ole whip—they lie as say I went out to fight, an' took a bowie! 'Twas Job's own knife, as any fool might ha' made

known, if he'd cared to speak truth. I pushed up the ole grey, an' I rode him down! The skunk lay still, an' I thought to have killed him.

"After awhile I drew up to look, an' Job, he waited till I was close on him, an' shot. The darned fool fired from his side, an' missed a mark bigger nor is a haystack in a wind. I threw myself on him—I snatched his knife—an I——. The Lord knows my sins. I wasn't altogether guilty o' that crime. Then I rode off to Timbs's clearin', an' I found Mary——. Oh, boys, she was beautiful! I told her Job was dead, an' she'd best go buy mourning. She cried out, an' said—said she loved *me!* She offered to go with me over the world—leave her folks an' her friends to go with *me*, as was a murderer in men's sight. I threw her off—I said to her, 'Shall it be your folks, or mine, or Job Leach's, as shall put up our notice?'

"I left her there, an' I rode on, a'most day an' night, till I come into Kansas—an' there, distraught as I was, I—you know the rest! Don't every child through California and Oregon know Phil Death of Santa Marta? Is that the minister? You be welcome, sir, but I'm nigh spent——."

Two hours after died the quondam rowdy, penitent, so far as man could judge, but preserving to the last, as I heard, that tone and manner which I have endeavoured to depict; a manner that seemed grossly unbecoming his profession and his condition, according to our ideas, yet not perhaps as shocking to the ear of Heaven. The habits of life are *not* thrown off, when death suddenly overshadows the soul with its awful presence.

THE HOUNDS OF THE JUNGLE.

AS a Protestant, I utterly scorn and detest the instinct which drives a man from among his fellows into a solitary or Essenian life; but as a rough-and-ready student in natural science, I recognise the force of that same instinct throughout the animal world. Among the most delightful puzzles of zoology is the raison d'être of the "rogue" elephant. How or when, or wherefore, he takes to a hermit-life, abandoning the social joys of his kind, the old familiar pastures, the company of his mate, and the hope of a family, are questions that ask themselves of every shikari; every writer deems it his duty to offer at least a few words on this unsolved enigma—to suggest some analogy, or frankly to confess his bewilderment. Some have it that the "rogue" is an outcast from the herd, driven from their society on account of his incurable villany and turbulence; others, that accident alone separated him long since from his natural family, and that a tender yearning for those he has lost makes him thus morose; others attribute his outlawry to some objectionable disease. It seems to be probable that each of these causes may at times have its effect; but on looking farther afield, among all species and genera of warm-blooded things, one is led to suspect an instinct of isolation which affects animals as well as mankind. For whatever be the circumstances which cast out the "rogue" from his herd, many other creatures are similarly moved. The solitary snipe we all know, but understand not. The solitary baboon, wolf, bear, and "savalino," I have found or heard of in many parts. All such animals are savage and dangerous according

to their powers of mischief; but whether this be the cause or effect of their solitary existence, is a question we are not yet able to answer. One point about them, however, is perfectly certain—they are always very fat, which is an encouragement to bachelors.

One of the most curious cases of this society-hating mania—misfortune, what you will—is that of the racoon, an animal most active, merry, and companionable. That any creature enjoying the advantage of such bright eyes, such a long, droll nose, such a pretty, brindled skin, and such wonderful agility, should deliberately forego the use of these charms, and hide them in the desert beyond the admiration of any mate, may well seem incredible. But in the neglected annals of the 'coon, heroes or criminals are found who have performed this act of self-renunciation. Not commonly, of course. Hermits are not more frequent among the 'coons than with ourselves, though perhaps, seeing how beautifully barred are the sleek tails of the former, and how very entertaining seems to be their conversation when in troops, such self-sacrifice is more meritorious on their part. The hermit 'coon, unlike our paltry imitation article, steadily lives his own life; making no weak efforts to get "position" again, nor asking any aid whatsoever; he dispenses with society, the family hearth, and social things in general. He speaks to none, and none speak to him.

It had long been an ambition of mine, as of many another sportsman in America, to fall in with one of those rare heroes. Firstly, because in our small circle of miners, undying fame awaits the man bringing home a solitary 'coon; secondly, because he is exceedingly good to eat; thirdly, because he is a mystery. On all these accounts I was delighted to hear, from a strange Indian who visited me one evening, that an animal of this description had his dwelling-place in a belt of jungle surrounding a low rocky hill about four miles from my "ramada." At once I set forth for the spot, with a peon carrying some cold meat, a rug, a rifle, a

bottle of brandy (for snake bites, you know), and a shot gun. Before it grew quite dark, I was stretched upon the hill-top, with my feet close to the hot fire, a saddle beneath my head, and rifle under my right shoulder. And in an hour after I was dreaming of the hermit 'coon.

Between three and four in the morning the hunter always wakes; if a novice, roused by the sudden chill of that coldest hour; if an old hand, from habit. That night I awoke with a consciousness of being later out than usual, and sprang suddenly to my feet. Our fire was very low; the black and awful darkness seemed to be visibly shrouding and smothering it as with a mantle. Not a star shone overhead, but dim, steam sheets of vapour floated above the surface of the ground. We had camped in the midst of a long ridge, and the last faint radiance of the fire lost itself in air, not lighting up even the short mountain grass. As I stood within a few inches of the embers, their glow failed to reach me, and I shivered with the cold. But long habit teaches the traveller not too hastily to stir his camp-fire, at least in quarters which he does not know. Some wild beasts are scared by light, but wild men are always drawn thereto, like vultures to the prey. So, for a moment, I stood still, listening to the voices of the night, striving to catch, through the long deep boom of the bull-frogs and the hylas, those keener, shriller sounds which tell of man's approach—the rattle and clank of harness or weapon, the thud of horses' hoofs. But no such warnings were audible. The frogs thundered on without a break; the night-birds screamed and twittered. All other things were dumb at that hour, gone to their rest, lying in wait, or not yet risen. With a shudder, half of cold, half of unreasoning superstition, I turned from that black void, which floated round me like a sea of mist and darkness. Feeling the way carefully with my feet, I passed round the fire, stepping over the big logs which stretched, like the arms of a cross, far out into the grass. Cautiously through the blackness I advanced, until reaching the spot where a heap of fuel had been piled up

overnight. And there I found myself in the arms of a man, upright and on the watch.

His strong limbs closed round me like cables, restraining my movements. "Tsh!" he whispered, in that warning note which, through all lands and times, has commanded another's attention.

"What is it?" I asked in the same guarded tone, recognising my faithful peon.

"Coyotés, senor!"

His manner, and the fact of his standing thus carefully on guard, showed me that the Indian was alarmed; but who had ever dreamed of danger from a coyoté, or from a pack of such brutes? Yet Manuelé was brave, I knew.

"Are you afraid of wild dogs, Indian?" I asked, feeling inclined to laugh.

"Si! Tengo miedo!" he answered, simply, but in a tone which seemed to rebuke either my rashness or my ignorant woodcraft. I said nothing, but stood in thought. Just then, from the farther end of the ridge, as I judged, a low whimper broke upon the night, audible, as are all musical notes, above the deep chorus of the frogs. After a moment of silence another call answered it from the opposite quarter. Then, low and soft and most grateful to the ear, reviving happy recollections of old days, from all points of the compass rose the gentle murmuring of the pack. I made a movement. "Steady, for your life!" breathed the Indian in my ear.

I could not comprehend what peril there was for us, two well-armed men, from such cowardly assailants as are the wild dogs of tropical America. I had met them before, and never yet had used, nor seen others use, against them, any weapon more severe than a stone or a stick. But perhaps it might be well, before proceeding farther, to describe the creature which thus alarmed my trusty peon.

The coyoté has a very extensive range over the central part of

North America. He is found from the Colorado to the Oronoko, and perhaps still farther to the southward. His appearance varies considerably according to habitat, but in general he is clothed in a warm, thick coat of white or fawn colour. His nose is very sharp, eyes large and protruding, ears broad and long and pointed. In general they hang over like a bloodhound's; but a coyoté, unlike the dog, has a power of erecting them, which gives him a very curious aspect. He is said to be descended from the hounds brought from Spain by the Conquistadores, but this opinion is rather founded on the tradition of the Indians than upon scientific deduction. Very probably it is correct, although coyoté is a pure Aztec word, with the final "l" softened into "é" as in many other instances; but certainly there are points of great difference between any modern race of bloodhounds and the North American coyoté. The latter cannot bark, which perhaps proves nothing; his jaws are sharp almost as a greyhound's; his tail is bushy—very much more so, at least, than that of any smooth-haired dog. In habits the coyoté wanders yet farther from his supposed type. He cannot be tamed to any useful purpose; he has not the faintest idea of gratitude or affection; cunning and cowardice are the main features of his character. Of his manner of life something will be learned in the continuation of my story.

I had perfect faith in Manuelé's courage, and he had given too many proofs of clever woodcraft to leave me any doubt on that score, but why we should be alarmed at the approach of a thousand of such animals I could not conceive. Nevertheless, I stole quietly back to my bed for the arms left there, little consoled in my mysterious perturbation by the Indian's gloomy whisper, "You can go, señor; but a rifle won't be much use if they attack us!" So I fetched the guns and machete, and resumed my place beside him. Scarcely had I done so, when the silence that had followed that low chorus of whimpers was suddenly broken by a clear, bell-like challenge, softened indeed, but unmistakable. Perhaps it was fancy, but in that moment I thought I could hear

the rush of many broad paws over rocks and dewy grass. For a moment all was still again, but Manuelé's heart beat loud. Then a second and a third challenge rang out less clearly. Then, after a pause of four or five minutes, the whimpering was resumed. The Indian drew a long breath. "We are safe for this time, señor!" he said.

"What are they doing?" I asked, astonished at the silence. "I have always heard coyotés cry on the scent like a pack of hounds."

"You'll hear them loud enough presently," he said. "They are turning the river now. What do I mean? Why, sending on some of their best dogs to drive the game back if he should take to water, as he's pretty sure to do when they put him up. Coyotés hate water, like monkeys, though they swim so beautifully. In half an hour you'll hear them give cry; and perhaps see them bring their game in if you wait long enough. It's all right now!" he added, throwing an armful of wood upon the fire.

Following the Indian's example, I threw myself down again, after stirring the ash-smothered embers. In the morning would be time enough to ask an explanation of the night's alarm. Once more I fell fast asleep, and no dread of these mysterious dogs disturbed my dreams. It was still dark as a mine when I awoke, startled afoot by the sudden outburst of twenty clamorous throats. The coyotés were on the trail! Their musical cry, reckless and unguarded now, resounded from hill to hill, and echoed in the deep forest. All at once it burst upon the ear, as if some messenger from the front had just arrived. Past the lower ridge, down the forest to our left, swept the pack, each hound seeming to rival another in noisy glee. Across the wind they galloped, and the rising gusts bore to us that cheery music long after they had passed far away through the long glades and green savannahs. I looked around. No star nor moon was visible, nor any break in the heavens; but far above the horizon to the southward a line of great cones, rosy and purple, hung like lamps in the black sky.

The earth was unseen; the sky spread out as a cloak of velvet; no light above or below save those magical cones which, like vast crystals set in ebony, hung suspended in glowing radiance above our heads. It was a lovely sight, but strangely awesome to those who understood it not. I knew the vision well. Many a time had I watched the dawn thus strike the volcanic peaks of Costa Rica, a hundred miles to the southward. I recognised the great shafts of the Merivalles, and the fiery crown of Torialba, which the misty atmosphere of day hid from our view. In each continent have I seen that fairy vision, which never loses its beauty nor sublimity, but rather seems to gain with each occasion.

Within ten minutes light began to spread over the eastern horizon, and the Costa Rican volcanoes faded slowly from sight among the clouds, to be beheld no more until the following dawn. Then my peon arose, blue and helpless as are all Indians at that chilly hour. Our kettle was already singing and steaming among the embers; we took a pull of coffee each from the tin pannikin I carried, changed the caps of our guns, and strode off towards the misty forest. But on the verge I remembered a remark of Manuelé's the previous night.

"Do you think the coyotés will come back to this spot?" I asked, pausing.

"Of course," he answered, "and bring their game with them. At this time of year all animals must drive the prey towards their dens. How could the pups and heavy bitches catch a deer, or even a pig? They would be winded in five minutes. And those who went on to the low land last night, are they to get no share for their hard work?"

"How long will they be, do you think?"

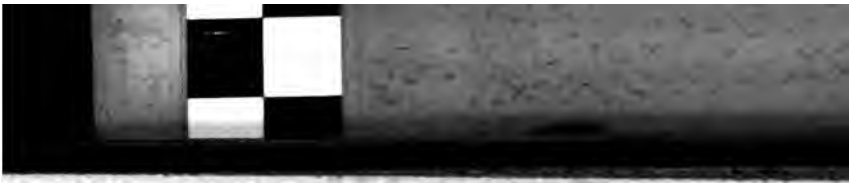
"It depends on the game afoot. If it be a fine deer, they may not return for three or four hours yet; if a drove of pigs, they will not be so long."

"And they will drive it to this very spot?"

"As near as they can."

"Then take this shot-gun, Indian, and bag the 'pisoté solo,' if you can find him. I shall stay on the ridge, and wait the coyotés' return." He laughed, and entered the dusky forest. I went back to camp, and waited the result, sitting on a log by the fire.

It was now broad daylight, and each dewdrop on the rocky hill was sparkling in the sun. Among the many memories of the jungle which crowd my mind, that scene stands out distinct and bright, and I would try to give the reader some idea of its glorious beauty. The ridge on which I sat rose abruptly from the forest, which edged it on either side. Far beneath me the great lake sparkled and shone, its sunny breakers, white-crested and thunderous, rolling to the shore like waves of a lesser Atlantic. Many a tall and crested island rose from its bosom, encircled with the fleecy mists of dawn. East and west and north and south over the watery plain towered those great volcanoes which are the emblems of the land, known by sonorous Indian names, full of threats and mystery—Mombacho, Madera, Momotombo, and a thousand more. The hill-side was covered with short, fine grass, useless for pasture, through which the red and grey rocks showed themselves abruptly. No ferns or flowers sprang on that smooth expanse, parched and shrivelled daily by the fierce sun-rays, but among the tree tops on which I looked down the lianas spread in sheets of blossom. Climbing palms waved their finger-like plumes above the boughs, seeking to grasp a fresher victim. The brown tresses of the parasites bound the forest together in a flowery net, supporting in their tough slender arms many a giant trunk which must otherwise have fallen by the weight of its far-spreading crown. All colours of leaves the forest showed. Some still green and fresh as in the beginning of the rains; some purple and crimson and yellow in decay; some dark as cyprus. And among the wilderness of trees, looking landwards, rose a hundred of such grey hills as that on which I sat, mostly round and smooth and bowl-shaped, to be recognised at a glance as memorials of



the time when all this land was a yard-deep crust, seething and working over the internal fire; bubbles of stone, still too thinly covered with soil to support the encroaching forest. For we are here in the centre of the fiery circle, in the very home of earthquakes and convulsion. Each river-bank, each hill, the very sand beneath our feet, tells its story of the past, and warns us for the future. The mountains smoke, and the solid earth scarce rests from quivering. The land is cut and riven with mighty fissures; the hills swell visibly to the bursting; the waters fail and overflow without a visible cause. But a glorious country still. Of an atmosphere most serene and healthful and windy; of a richness which would seem a miracle in our steadier, slower clime; of a grandeur and variety and loveliness not to be surpassed in any Eden of the world.

For an hour I sat and gazed upon this scene, drinking in all its radiant glory. The monkeys passed beneath me towards the water, clashing and chattering among the boughs. The congos sat all melancholy and listless upon the outer limbs of the forest, howling lazily. Crickets and tree-frogs sang among the leaves. Parrots croaked overhead as they fluttered from glade to glade. Scarlet macaws flashed like fire about the tallest trees, screaming and croaking. At the bottom of the ridge a half-grown boar showed himself, but bounded grunting away before I could use my rifle. And all this while the sun was mounting up and pouring hotter shafts upon my head.

At length I fancied the breeze brought a faint clamour, as of dogs upon the scent. Five minutes more, and a tall buck, his coat all staring and wet, his tongue hanging low, bounded across a rocky stream, choked with big-leaved plants, which intersected one of the glades within my sight. He vanished in the forest. And now there was no possibility of mistake. The distant cry of the pack came each instant louder to the ear; at top-speed they swept along the trail, heads up high, and bushy tails waving. They followed over the stream without a check, and disappeared

under the arches of the wood. Presently I heard the crashing of undergrowth, and threw myself flat upon the ground. Labouring terribly, the buck broke cover at the foot of the ridge, and ran along the forest on my left. The coyotés' triumphant cry rang louder and louder, and then they too appeared, running as fresh as at the beginning of the chase. They dashed along in a compact mass, eight or ten couple of grown dogs, and tailing after were three or four heavy bitches, and a dozen sturdy pups of all ages; these had plainly joined the chase only a few moments before, for they were playing and biting one another. I rose to my feet, and watched with the greatest interest, for it seemed certain that the buck must have overrun the coyotés' trail and his own scent. My guess was correct. On the edge of the forest, a big old dog, which led the pack, raised his muzzle and howled. Each hound stood still, and I then could mark that some of the finest animals were much more blown than the others, thus showing that the game had been turned by a forced gallop. The leader sniffed about for a moment, then uttered a sharp whine, on which the pack opened like a fan, while the whelps shrank far into the rear. Scarcely had the last dog vanished in the undergrowth, nose and tail to earth, when a short challenge rang out. There was a moment's pause, while the old dogs verified the fact, I suppose. A bolder cry proclaimed that all was well, and the pups, which had been standing still as statues in their place, dashed off into the wood. Then the music of the pack broke out again; they swept away under the mysterious trees, and I saw them no more. But the buck had not a quarter of a mile of "run" in him when he passed my hiding-place.

I never beheld better hunting, and the sight suggested to me a curious reflection. I whisper it to you, reader; and, oh! repeat it not to any M.F.H. proud of his "scientific hunting." I wondered vaguely and fearfully whether our dogs might not have among themselves such a proverb as warns *us* not to teach our grandmothers the art of sucking eggs. I wondered whether it

was the mere impatience of a wearisome and needless education which led them to commit the errors we see. Certainly no training could have bettered one feature of that day's run. To drive a grown buck back to his starting-place, to send on a portion of the pack to that point where he would strive to break cover, to head him again and again into the forest, where his speed could not be exerted to the full, were feats which might well puzzle all the best dogs in England and the human intelligence which directs them. Yet I could not but believe that the despised coyotés had done all this, and were in the habit of doing it, without training, by simple instinct, reason, and experience.

"And now, tell me, Indio," I said to Manuelé, an hour after, as we trotted back to the *rancho*, "why were you frightened last night?"

"I heard the coyotés moving," he answered; "and I knew there was danger. You see, they are not, like other beasts, afraid of fire; wild and untamable as the creatures now are, they have not quite forgotten the instincts of their forefathers. Coyotés know well enough that there's food of some sort to be found in camp, and so they cluster round it at night! and the larger your fire, the more coyotés. Ay! there's cause for fear when one is alone and the pack is out. They're worse than tigers or cowardly pumas, though there are few who believe it. They come sneaking up through the black glades, noiseless and silent, and they squat round on their haunches, and their eyes shine like stars. They wait and watch, and will not be driven off. You shoot one, but others come. They sit like ghosts, like pale devils, round your fire, never stirring, never taking their shiny eyes from off your face. Ah! I tell you, señor, it is terrible to be beset by coyotés! Hour by hour they sit there, just out of reach, in a circle about you. It is a nightmare! From very weariness you doze off, and, waking with a horrid start, you shout to see how near the devils have crept. As you spring up, they slink back again, and take the former ring, licking their foxy jaws, but

making no sound. And you—you rush at them; and they glide away, and vanish on the instant in the black undergrowth. But, as you return, they come forth again, they sit down again, and stare with never a wink in their green eyes. It is very terrible, señor!" said Manuelé, whose gaze was fixed in front, as if detailing a horrid memory.

"Has such an adventure happened to you, then?" I asked.

"Si, señor, once—pray the saints I may never have such a night again! It was up in Segovia, where I had been washing gold. I was camping all by myself in the forest, journeying towards one of the streams of the Wanx, for my compadre had taken all our dust to Segovia Viejo to exchange it for many things we wanted, and was to meet up the river. So I was by myself. At that time, and it's not so long ago, I should have laughed, like yourself, had any one warned me against the dogs, or told me there was danger to be feared from them. And yet I had lived in the woods all my life. Jaguars and pumas and leopards were the only beasts I should have been afraid to meet at night, and against them one can in a manner protect oneself by lighting a big fire. To coyotés I had never given a thought, though they are in great plenty about those parts.

"Well, I was camping all alone, as I said, travelling towards the Wanx. At sundown, one day, I found myself in a deep old wood, such as are not common on the hills. It was more like one of those great forests by the river-bottoms on the plains. The ground was black and oozy underfoot, the lower growth scanty, the lianas thick as a man's waist. Just the place for tigers to breed in, I thought, if there be any carib ruins near, or any caverns. But it was growing dusk, and there was no time to lose. I had a calabash of water and provisions, so it seemed best to risk the tigers rather than run a chance of losing oneself. So I built a fire, and cooked some 'charqui,' and lay down under a tree. It was about midnight I awoke, roused by warm breath upon my face. I sprang to my feet, just in time to catch a glimpse of

some big, pale beast, vanishing round the trunk. I looked about. In a circle round the fire, just as I have described, sat a dozen huge creatures, pressing almost into the blaze, and staring at me with big eyes that shone like emeralds. They were scarce six feet from me. For a moment, while the start lasted, I fancied I was still dreaming; but very soon I recognised these unexpected guests, and laughed aloud. Only a pack of coyotés! I took a stick and shied it at the nearest. It hit him hard, but he made no sound; only moved back a few inches. I ran at them with my machete, and they glided off into the darkness, as gently as oil from water. I came back laughing, quite tickled to remember how funny the creatures had looked squatting so solemnly about my fire. But the mirth died out when I saw them every one slink quietly back to his place, and sit down and stare again. The mirth was gone, but still I was not a bit alarmed. Only they looked so ghostly somehow, with their pale, shadowy coats and burning eyes. But when I drove them off again, and they still came back on the instant, I began to shiver a little.

"I lay down and pretended to sleep, watching them. For ten minutes they rested perfectly still, never moving a muscle, nor blinking their eyes. The hair of my flesh began to stand up, and I half doubted whether these were living, blooded things at all. Then one of the biggest rose up, and moved a few inches nearer; the others followed his example. Then they sat again and stared for ten minutes. It was a horrid nightmare, and the sweat poured off me on the ground. Then the movement was repeated, and again and again, until the nearest dog, the leader of the pack, was within two feet of my body, and his eyes blazed over me like green lamps; and I could see how his lips were drawn back, and the big teeth were set.

"I could bear it no longer. Seizing the gun beneath my shoulder, I sprang up and fired. He dropped dead among the blazing logs, and the others bounded away into the underwood.

That has settled them, I thought, with a great sigh of relief, dragging the body out by the hind legs. I waited for half an hour, and all remained quiet. So at length weariness overpowered me, and I slept.

"My dreams were so horrid and ghastly, that I woke up with a start. In fancy I had seen the coyotés, grown to a size gigantic and of aspect terrible, creeping closer and closer towards me, and when I opened my eyes——Gran Dios! the dream was realised! Round me they were squatting again, the pallid devils, watching my face! Madly I rushed at them, and they vanished —only to slink back as before. Then I looked out for a tree to climb, for I *knew* my next doze must be fatal. I hunted all about, by the light of a blazing brand, but not a trunk in that solemn, cruel forest was practicable. The coyotés followed me, sliding from cover to cover, noiseless and ghostly. I grew mad with fear and superstition. Suddenly, while I stood mazed and panting, wet with cold sweat, and glaring wildly into the darkness, a thunderous, reverberating roar made the forest trees quiver and the very ground to shake. For nearly a minute it echoed among the trunks, then died tremulously away. I knew the sound, for many a time had it roused me at dead of night, with a cold shudder of fear. Few men there are who have blessed God to hear the voice of a jaguar, but I cried out my thanksgiving aloud. The coyotés rushed past me in every direction, and I could trace their hasty flight by the crack of broken sticks, and the rustle and swish of the undergrowth. I was not a bit fearful of the tiger. It seemed to me then that Heaven had sent him to preserve my body from those devilish monsters, and I knew he would not injure me. Straight I went back to the fire, and fell asleep, feeling confident in the guard of my preserver. That seems odd, doesn't it? That a man should lie down happily within a few yards of a hungry jaguar, and thank God for his presence! But so it was. Next morning I found his trail circling round and round the fire, as if he had mounted guard over me all night;

and sometimes—sometimes still, I think the blessed saints themselves sent that beast to save me.

"Such was my night with coyotés, señor, on the head-waters of the Wanx, and that memory it is which makes me tremble to hear the whimpering of those demons in the darkness."

"And reason enough," I cried. "You tell a story well, Manuelé. I should like to hear more of your adventures. By the way, did you kill the 'pisoté solo'?"

"Never saw him, señor."

AFTER THE GEOGRAPHICAL.

WHAT a pleasure it is for us old wanderers—young, many of us in years, but old in peril and experience—to stroll round that map-lined room of Burlington House, where the Geographical Society holds its meetings (*temp.* 1870), on the night of a debate! What delight to meet in the shadow of those monstrous benches—who designed them, who fitted up, and what is the use of them?—some comrade of half-forgotten adventure, some kind friend who has helped us with purse or person in a land where such aid has tenfold value! And, even if one has lived still and staid in the dull pleasant fields of England, who is there who can look without interest upon the men who sit upon those wondrous benches—the mighty hunters, the travellers weather-stained, the generals and sea-captains, who delight to pass an evening there? They have made history, many of these men—not the history of England, nor of Europe, but that great story of which we only see the dim commencement—the story of all mankind. These are the M. C.'s of humanity. They have gone forth, life in hand, to introduce one family of human beings to another; themselves the ambassadors of Europe to a thousand dusky peoples who have been waiting their kindly offices from the first of time till now. Were not travellers of a shy and sensitive disposition mostly, I should delight to sketch a portrait here or there among the audience; to tell the outside world what manner of men they are whose names and books are household words in a thousand English homes, where, far removed from

danger or privation or stirring incident, the quiet inmates love to read the heroism of their countrymen.

But there are hours after the formal meetings of the Geographical which are to us even more fertile of pleasure: "Come round to me when it is over," whispers one tried Fellow in our ear; "there will be —— and ——. Little Asterics is going to tell us this story or that." And our acceptance is given with an eager pleasure that no invitation from duchess or chamberlain could rouse. Impatiently we wait the peroration of that bearded comrade who is describing his ingenious scheme for tunnelling the Rocky Mountains, or irrigating the fertile slopes of the Sahara, or shooting the sagacious baboon with bomb-shells. He concludes at length, with a Q. E. D. of triumph, which seems to range this problem among the fixed facts of engineering science; but, lo! to him uprises another bearded comrade, who proceeds to expose the error of his theorem, the fallacy of his axioms, and the impossibility of his conclusion. Then ensues a Babel of opinions, all backed with names and dates equally recondite, and, it would seem, equally open to question. Perhaps we also have an idea upon the subject at issue, and in turn we rise to express it. The venerable president announces us to the meeting:—"Mr. Author Fellow, who crossed the Rocky Mountains on a velocipede—or lived for six months upon sand and hieroglyphics in the Sahara—or dwelt ten years up a upas-tree with a she-baboon," as the case may be; and forthwith I express *my* views, which are of course utterly opposed to those of every one who went before; for no point of character is more thoroughly developed among us than that quality which we call individuality, but our enemies—love of contradiction; all in courtesy and good temper, mind you; we don't quarrel at the Royal Geographical. But at length the sitting is over. The promoter of the scheme replies, with more or less of happiness, to each of his opponents. The president thanks every one, making, it may be, a sly hit here or there at some old friend; and, warm from the contest, we

refresh ourselves with a cup of tea and a laughing defence of our heterodox opinions; and then the invited take each other's arms, and troop out along Piccadilly to the chambers of our host.

It has occurred to me that a story heard on such an occasion might be given to the public without violating the sanctity of the symposium.

About a fortnight since, five of us met in a little room about St. James's Street. One had long been resident in the Far East, and him I will call, as they called him over there, the Tuan Besar, or Big Gentleman; another had just returned from a roving expedition through Spanish America: him I will call the Caballero; a third was an Indian tiger slayer, whom we addressed as the Shikari; the fourth was a sailor, and we may distinguish him as such; the fifth was a great proprietor on the Rio Plata, from whence he was newly arrived, and I have his permission to name him the "haciendero." The conversation turned at first upon a gentleman we had met that night, whose violent temper was the terror of all who had dealings with him.

"Have you ever seen a man amok, Tuan?" said the haciendero.

"I have seen seven bodies in the streets of Bangkok, and six wounded on litters; all the work of our Malay serang. I've seen the whole crew of a native boat chased overboard in Singapore Roads, and only two reached shore. I've shot the best servant I ever had, with the blood of two poor women still wet upon his 'cris.' But the most awful case of amok madness that has come under my own observation was that of the Illanum fellow, when I was a prisoner of the Serebas pirates."

"Is it the ghost of the Tuan we are entertaining here?" muttered the Shikari.

"No, it is not," answered the other. "Do you think men are not sometimes as merciful as tigers? Well, in your cynicism perhaps you would not admit this of the Serebas, but at least they are as intelligent and not more cowardly than tigers. You

Indians would deny us the right to be killed honestly outside your blazing jungles, or to be saved by any other providence than a two-ounce bullet. Why, I had gone through more dangers than ever you dreamed of, while they were birching you at Eton, and I'm a sounder man now than you boys about town."

"Never mind him, Tuan," interposed the Haciendero. "Tell us how you were captured by these people, whose name, I must admit, never reached my ears before; and how the Illanum fellow ran a-muck, and how you escaped."

"I am always willing to fight my battles over again," said the good old Tuan. "This is my story:—

"It was before some of you were born, and before any of you can recollect, that I first set foot in Singapore,—a poor place then, which had to sing small on that tiny island between Batavia and Hong Kong. It had not more than two thousand inhabitants, and the town was nearly hidden in a mangrove swamp. Of the hundred and twenty thousands of Chinamen who now curse the place, there were scarce as many scores, and the white population hardly existed. But Singapore was always a pushing place: every man of its merchants scheming and intriguing in this or that neighbouring state where he had no right on earth to meddle. And the firm in which I was junior partner did not stand behind its rivals in such folly. We lent money here, we encouraged rebellion there, we recruited, we sheltered,—in fact, our house carried on the game royally. It was in furtherance of some such business that one day I found myself obliged to run across to Bruni. Seeing what my mission had for its object, it was of course impossible to take a passage in any English vessel, even had one stood at my service; I was obliged to charter a native boat. And to you men who have not visited the Straits that craft would have seemed an object as droll as this world can show. She was about thirty to forty feet long, decked from bows to stern with 'ataps' or palm-thatch, tied upon teak timbers that met each other in the middle of the deck at an angle of thirty

degrees. Through a square hole aft one could descend into the cabin of the 'reis,' an apartment six feet long by four broad, and three high. Another hole forward opened above the hold, which was filled with 'notions,' the speculation of the crew. No bulwarks were there to this curious craft, and when she sailed upon an even keel one was obliged to sit astride upon the middle ridge of the 'ataps,' as upon the roof of a dog-kennel. It is but fair to admit that I never saw the ark, as I termed her, in such a reasonable position. Her fashion of sailing was upon beam ends, and in that condition one slope of the deck became horizontal of necessity. Scorpions and centipedes abounded, and they did not fear to chase the cockroaches and other vermin in our very sight. The Malays believed that the worst of these venomous reptiles become harmless on board ship, unless fresh importations, and certainly I saw no accident occur. On the fourth day we sighted the mountains of Borneo, and coasted round towards the capital. I was horribly tired of my uneasy couch upon the 'ataps,' for of course it was impossible to go below, and the view of those grand blue hills was the most cheering that had ever come before my sight. They hung high up in the clouds long before the low land grew visible, but at length the olive shadows of the Bornean wilderness filled that gap between cloudy mountain and blue sea, bordered along the coast-line by a pale-green sweep of mangroves, and, nearer still, by a long smooth belt of snowy sand divided by a wall of weed, built up evenly by every tide. Pleasantly we coasted along, past Tanjong Datu, fated in the future to be a life-long casus between the Dutch and Rajah Brooke; past Tanjong Upi, of which the name preserves a memory of volcanic convulsions long since stilled. And, at length, on the seventh day after leaving Singapore, we came in sight of the Batang-Lupar River.

"But the time of year was not that usually chosen by the pirates for their excursions, and we had reasonable hope of passing unseen; even in the worst chance we felt confident that

these prudent marauders would think twice before risking a collision with the white authorities; and, for my own part, though not unconscious of an excited thrill in turning my glass upon the reedy mouth of that terrible stream, I could not but feel contempt for a horde of savages, scarcely clothed except in stolen silver and gold, blood-stained. It seemed downright absurd, excepting in so far as it was disgraceful, that thousands of British subjects, clothed and missionized, and generally tortured with improvement, should be liable from day to day to lose their partially-civilised heads for the mere amusement of these fiendish baboons. I knew they scourged these coasts and others adjacent with desperate and incredible ferocity; but I could not believe that the English flag, which my 'serang' displayed fore and aft and at each masthead, could possibly be treated with contempt by any pirates, however naked.

"Such were my views on retiring to my berth, in a cockroach nest, while slowly forging past the mouth of the Batang-Lupar, on a night so soft and shining one might have thought the starry floor of heaven itself hung lower and more tenderly over that lovely land. Ah, you boys! It is not only the capacity for pleasure one loses in growing old,—more than this we lose!—the power of interpreting Nature's lesson; that thrill of divine despair we used to feel in gazing on her glory. Once on a time there was no revelation, no creed for me so visibly true as the tropical night. Now, I must seek here or there for corroboration; —the old instinct has lost its power."

"A man is nearly spent when he has used up his moonlight sensations," said the cynical Shikari. "Stick to the moonshine, you young fellows! With it passes true love, and younger sons' fortune, and hope and trust, and the brightness of life. Stick to it till the last!" The Tuan proceeded without reply.

"I don't suppose any of you here could understand or picture to yourselves the glory of a coast scene in the Eastern seas, except, perhaps, the Shikari, who remembers it so well, and loves

it so, he must needs sneer at his own emotion. You all know the other Tropic; but, for my own part, hearing the description of American shores, I cannot believe they show the same beauty as ours in the Straits."

"Right!" cried the Caballero. "There is the difference between Paradise and Heaven."

"What our friend may wish to signify by that, I don't quite know," resumed the Tuan. "But I observe there is generally a meaning to be found in his wildest utterances, if one have only a poetic dictionary at hand, and a quiet month in the country before one.

"Well, gentlemen, whatever be the just comparison between American scenes and Asiatic, you may take my word that a lovelier night than this had never been seen on earth. After the moon rose, our wind blew slacker and slacker till it died away. Then the Malays grew nervous, and found themselves in a little silent group, crouched upon the atap-deck midships. They gazed anxiously towards the wood of cocoa-nuts which glittered like water in the moon-rays. They whispered softly among themselves, and now and again the Reis lifted up his voice, and chanted some verses from the Koran. Very solemn and weirdly it was to hear the solemn outbreak of that droning cry in the deep stillness, but such sounds were little in accordance with the English character we desired to retain, and so I warned the crew. But the Reis answered, reverently, 'We are in great danger, Tuan. You have trust in your flag.' I could make no reply to that grave rebuke.

"The night wore on. I dozed feverishly, stretched upon the sloping ataps. All at once, towards one o'clock I suppose, a murmur and a hurried movement of the crew awoke me. One and all had sprung to their feet. Some were staring with fixed eyes towards the river mouth; one or two hurried about the tiny deck, wringing their hands and muttering; but the Reis and the serang and the elder men were down upon their knees, with heads

low bent, and faces turned to the Holy City. There was no tumult and little sound; only a low, inarticulate murmur, and a soft rustling of the 'ataps' under restless feet. I glanced towards the shore. Stealing out from the mangrove belt, between two grassy tongues of land, swift as sea-birds and as noiseless, appeared the war-praus of the Serebas. A train of fire swept after them, and the glassy sea seemed to spring up in a flame to meet their hundred paddles. Two praus there were, each containing full fifty men. To resist was evidently hopeless, and the Malays made no preparation. I still endeavoured to retain my faith in that red flag overhead, and with a sickening heart watched the praus' course. Our suspense was short, for the muffled paddles drove them swift as death, and within five minutes we could hear the dull, faint clank, and see monstrous figures that upheld the fighting deck. And then, in an instant, the horrid yell of those fiends burst out terribly in the night, resounding over sea and shore, and echoing in savage discord through the black glades of their forests. Then I knew our lives were over. I sat down upon the 'ataps,' dazed and half-unconscious. They paddled in silence after that sudden uproar, and the heavy boats fairly leapt along the waves under the eager beat of those strong arms. I watched their deadly approach without the power of making any effort to escape or to defend myself. It was a ghastly time. I noted their glossy yellow skins as they drew nearer, the wild eyes almost protruding from the brows, the coarse mouths stained scarlet and black with 'penang.' I marked the sparkling of their long brazen gauntlets, covering their right arm from knuckle to elbow; of the score of rings adorning the outer edges of each ear from top to lobe in graduated size. I saw the weapons of every warrior beside him, parang, or cris, or sabre, mostly hung with long died scalps. All these things I noticed in one stupid gaze as they rushed towards us.

"At fifty yards' distance, one of the richly-dressed Malays upon the fighting deck presented his rifle, and shot our Reis through

the head. The paddlers sprang up with a repetition of their frightful yell, and, screaming, flooded their fighting decks. The praus glided over to either side, and the warriors sprang down upon us. It was a crush and press of fiends, hacking, hewing, and thrusting, with a murderous clamour and bloodthirsty mirth, with a clashing of arms and a screaming of the wounded,—a hellish delight of carnage.

"I had hurried to the tiller, and there taken my stand. The crew was mostly cut down in the attitude of prayer, but two who jumped overboard were not pursued, save with savage and furious laughter. Standing alone in the stern, I was not meddled with, if seen, while any possibility of resistance remained; but when their murderous work was completed, a rush aft took place. I presented my gun, and cried that the first approaching was a dead man. Then they perceived my colour, for my face was white enough, I guess. The foremost, a handsome Malay, in gold-worked 'sarong,' kain bandara of gold cloth, and ivory-hilted cris, paused suddenly, and cried, in tones of astonishment and terror, 'Orang putih—weh!" The few Malays halted and looked at one another, but the wild Dyaks, drunk with blood, and careless of any danger, moral or other, still pressed yelling towards me, in spite of their frenzied protests. One, whom I believed to be a Dyak, a stalwart warrior profusely adorned with golden ornaments, broke through the ring, and in self-defence I shot him. Then such a rush ensued, I thought my last moment arrived. But while presenting my gun again, two naked arms closed round me, and held me fast. In an instant I was thrown over, and my weapons snatched away. 'The Tuan Pamantuah!' screamed the breathless Malays. 'Hear him, friends! He is wise!' Then my assailant, standing in front of me, spoke a few words to the horrid crew, and one and all sat instantly down upon the blood-stained ataps. The chief bent towards me, and gave me his hand smilingly. I rose. The crowd made way for us silently, and we stepped across to the largest prau."

low bent, and faces turned to the Holy City. There was no tumult and little sound; only a low, inarticulate murmur, and a soft rustling of the 'ataps' under restless feet. I glanced towards the shore. Stealing out from the mangrove belt, between two grassy tongues of land, swift as sea-birds and as noiseless, appeared the war-praus of the Serebas. A train of fire swept after them, and the glassy sea seemed to spring up in a flame to meet their hundred paddles. Two praus there were, each containing full fifty men. To resist was evidently hopeless, and the Malays made no preparation. I still endeavoured to retain my faith in that red flag overhead, and with a sickening heart watched the praus' course. Our suspense was short, for the muffled paddles drove them swift as death, and within five minutes we could hear the dull, faint clank, and see monstrous figures that upheld the fighting deck. And then, in an instant, the horrid yell of those fiends burst out terribly in the night, resounding over sea and shore, and echoing in savage discord through the black glades of their forests. Then I knew our lives were over. I sat down upon the 'ataps,' dazed and half-unconscious. They paddled in silence after that sudden uproar, and the heavy boats fairly leapt along the waves under the eager beat of those strong arms. I watched their deadly approach without the power of making any effort to escape or to defend myself. It was a ghastly time. I noted their glossy yellow skins as they drew nearer, the wild eyes almost protruding from the brows, the coarse mouths stained scarlet and black with 'penang.' I marked the sparkling of their long brazen gauntlets, covering their right arm from knuckle to elbow; of the score of rings adorning the outer edges of each ear from top to lobe in graduated size. I saw the weapons of every warrior beside him, parang, or cris, or sabre, mostly hung with long died scalps. All these things I noticed in one stupid gaze as they rushed towards us.

"At fifty yards' distance, one of the richly-dressed Malays upon the fighting deck presented his rifle, and shot our Reis through

the head. The paddlers sprang up with a repetition of their frightful yell, and, screaming, flooded their fighting decks. The praus glided over to either side, and the warriors sprang down upon us. It was a crush and press of fiends, hacking, hewing, and thrusting, with a murderous clamour and bloodthirsty mirth, with a clashing of arms and a screaming of the wounded,—a hellish delight of carnage.

"I had hurried to the tiller, and there taken my stand. The crew was mostly cut down in the attitude of prayer, but two who jumped overboard were not pursued, save with savage and furious laughter. Standing alone in the stern, I was not meddled with, if seen, while any possibility of resistance remained; but when their murderous work was completed, a rush aft took place. I presented my gun, and cried that the first approaching was a dead man. Then they perceived my colour, for my face was white enough, I guess. The foremost, a handsome Malay, in gold-worked 'sarong,' kain bandara of gold cloth, and ivory-hilted cris, paused suddenly, and cried, in tones of astonishment and terror, 'Orang putih—weh!" The few Malays halted and looked at one another, but the wild Dyaks, drunk with blood, and careless of any danger, moral or other, still pressed yelling towards me, in spite of their frenzied protests. One, whom I believed to be a Dyak, a stalwart warrior profusely adorned with golden ornaments, broke through the ring, and in self-defence I shot him. Then such a rush ensued, I thought my last moment arrived. But while presenting my gun again, two naked arms closed round me, and held me fast. In an instant I was thrown over, and my weapons snatched away. 'The Tuan Pamantuah!' screamed the breathless Malays. 'Hear him, friends! He is wise!' Then my assailant, standing in front of me, spoke a few words to the horrid crew, and one and all sat instantly down upon the blood-stained ataps. The chief bent towards me, and gave me his hand smilingly. I rose. The crowd made way for us silently, and we stepped across to the largest prau."

"But I do not quite understand," interrupted the Sailor. "All the pirates of the Straits are more or less Malay by race, are they not?"

"It would take me half an hour to explain the political complications of Borneo," replied the Tuan; "and an hour to sketch the career of that wonderful man, the Pamantuah. We have not time for much detail. Let it suffice to say that the whole island was then subject, nominally, to the Sultan of Bruni, except the Dutch territory. Three great pangarans of the blood-royal—Malay, of course—undertook to govern the Dyak pirates of the Serebas and Sakarang rivers, and were professedly answerable to civilisation for their good behaviour. In reality, however, they had neither will nor power to coerce their subjects in one iota, nor did the Sultan attempt to exact obedience from either governor or governed. Under the lead of the Pamantuah, who first in history brought these warlike tribes to obey one head, the Dyaks made a convention with the pangarans: they agreed to pay a certain small tribute to the Sultan, on condition that his officers should accompany their marauding fleets, and give the rovers the benefit of their superior intelligence and of their European weapons. Thus it happened that Malay chiefs and their retainers were always present at those terrible scenes which made the Sarawak coast to be more dreaded than Sulu itself; and thus it happened that when, years afterwards, the best part of the Dyaks wished to abandon their horrid pursuit, Rajah Brooke found his deadliest foes in those Malay pangarans whose first duty it should have been to second his efforts. Have I made the political situation a little clearer?

"When we stood on the prau's deck, the Malays rose and followed us, with some twenty of the Dyaks more immediately attached to the Pamantuah, two of whom carried each a dripping head slung to his chowat, or waistbelt. The paddlers went below, and in an instant we shot off from the fatal craft, which the others were attaching to the smaller prau. The Pamantuah

kept me beside him, looking occasionally into my face with that frank and pleasant smile which is habitual on the Dyak features when unmoved by violent emotion. In the course of our political intrigues I had heard much of this great chief, whose talents, eloquence and courage must have made him a notable citizen in any country. Born to no great eminence, favoured but little by fortune, before attaining middle age he had brought under his sway a thousand savage chiefs, most jealous of all authority, and unprepared by tradition to admit any superior. Twenty thousand warriors were at this time under the Pamantuah's personal command, and the auxiliary force from the Sakarang, always at his order, numbered probably fifteen thousand more. A most extraordinary man, it must be admitted, in reflecting how slender were his means and how violent were the passions and prejudices which he conquered. Rajah Brooke, and through the Rajah, England, owes more to the Pamantuah than has yet been acknowledged.

"In a quarter of an hour we made the mouth of the Batang-Lupar, and were greeted with a yell of triumph from the good folks of Sibuyoh, who crowded the terraces of their lofty dwellings to see the landing of the booty. But we sped along up the river for two or three hours more, until reaching a small landing-place on the right bank. The Pamantuah gave me his hand, and we leapt ashore. I stood still and demanded to know my fate. 'We will send you across to Pontianak,' said one of the Malays, 'or forward you by sea. You are safe. The Pamantuah has given his word for you.' We resumed our march, and for an hour I balanced myself like a tight-rope dancer upon a Dyak high-road! Those fellows who trace our origin to apes might gather some noteworthy arguments in their favour from the customs of Borneo. The good folks there are not yet so far humanized as to feel wholly comfortable on dry ground. Their houses they elevate on posts twenty to thirty feet from mother earth. Their roads they raise on trestles three to ten feet high. Their bridges they hang from the tallest trees in the neighbourhood. And wonderful engineers they

are,—full of resource as Stephenson, and daring as Mr. Fell! I have seen Dyak bridges so delicately yet firmly suspended a hundred feet above the water, that with twenty men upon them they sway in the lightest breeze. I have seen Dyak houses,—one building, mind you,—a thousand and odd feet long. But it is of their suspended roads, 'batang' paths, as they are called, that I would speak. These consist simply of a single line of trees felled end to end, as the crow flies, through the forest. The crown and branches are lopped off, and the 'batang,' or trunk, is raised upon two huge stakes forming a St. Andrew's cross. To barefoot natives they are marvellously convenient, always dry, very lasting, and beyond the reach alike of prickly grasses and poisonous snakes. But to a booted European it will be believed this tight-rope mode of travel is by no means comfortable. Sometimes the 'batangs' lie twenty, thirty, or even forty feet above the ground in such a rugged country, and nowhere is the falling 'soft.' Even by daylight there is a certain nervousness, and even danger, in traversing a Dyak path; but when it comes to moonlight travel, I can only wish my foes that fate as the last aspiration of blind vengeance. Yet—though slipping at almost every step, and not unfrequently crashing bodily down into the blackness lying to an unknown depth below—I remember still how dreamy and beautiful was that night of horror, and how strange and weirdly our march. Before me in a long line, sparkling in the moonbeams, shining dully in the shadow, noiseless of foot as spectres, and vanishing suddenly and reappearing as such, the Dyak warriors stepped lightly on. Their weapons clashed from time to time, their innumerable ornaments never ceased to tinkle. Marvellously picturesque that procession seemed when some clear space in the black forest allowed free passage to the moonlight. Immediately in front and rear of me were the Malay Datus in their gorgeous sarongs and head handkerchiefs and kain bandaras, all shining with gold thread, or flashing suddenly out in a sheet of silvery light dazzling to the eye. And then the forest itself

through which we journeyed, how tenderly solemn it was! Overhead, each leaf of the huge black trees stood clearly out against the clear blue sky; but underneath, in those arcades and bowers where the verdure never dies, though the sun reaches them faint and sickly, a blackness as of velvet stretched itself along. Here a moon-tipped leaf sparkled abruptly out; there a long pencil of silver shivered down through some tiny gap. No sound rose on either side of us except the murmuring of insects, or, at rare intervals, the flutter of a startled bird. Wild cat and boar hushed their voices and fled noiselessly away before the light but threatening trample of our march. For an hour we journeyed, and scarce a word was spoken; for even these wild Dyaks, as I think, felt the deep solemnity of Nature. But at length, towards dawn, a shouting was heard in front, and we came out beneath an enormous building which threw a shadow black as ink upon the surrounding forest. A dusky crowd pressed yelling round me as I followed the Pamantuah towards the notched log serving as a staircase to the verandah. For the house stood full thirty feet above the ground. The chief led me to his own hearthplace, and, at a word from him, I was left in peace.

"Though ignorant of the Dyak patois, I could understand that these ferocious savages were narrating their heroism with no slight exaggeration. Many voices were raised at once, and much clever pantomime exhibited; for your sea Dyak is a noisy, loud-tongued fellow, whose undoubted bravery is tenfold heightened to the hearer by the most unscrupulous lying. Great heroes, no doubt, they made themselves, these murderers of helpless men. But suddenly the babble of triumph, of laughter and rejoicing, was broken by a wild and thrilling cry: 'Mati! Oh, my brother!'

"And the crowd swayed to and fro as in furious struggling. I sprang to my feet, for the words were Malay, and foreboded danger.

"The Pamantuah himself broke away and bounded to my side, just as a tall warrior, whose wild but handsome features revealed

to me his Illanun blood, broke through the opposing circle, and stood panting before us. Blood streamed down his face from an old wound of which the bandages were torn away, and mingled with the foam about his mouth. Eyes so distended and blazing that they scarce seemed human glared upon me. The broad chest shook with horror and passion, and from head to foot each limb was writhing, as only can the limbs of your Orientals.

"'Justice, Pamantuah!' screamed this terrible apparition. 'The white man has killed my brother, and I demand his life. I am a chief of the 'Lanun Sea Men.* I have fought bravely for you, I and my retainers; you dare not refuse me, Pamantuah.'

"The chief laughed low but scornfully.

"It is a new thing, men of Serebas,' he said, 'that a 'Lanun beggar should threaten the meanest of us. You served me with your brother and your slaves, for a just share of the booty, and I say to you, S'Ali the Amok, that, though you had all the rovers of Sulu here, you should not hurt one hair of this white man's head. Bind up your forehead, orang, or you will lose too much of that hot blood which threatens so readily. Go!'

"The 'Lanun stood still for an instant. Never through eternity shall I forget his ghastly face, blood-bedabbled, foam-streaked, working with all fell passions, and distorted beyond the horror of a dream. He stared straight in front, past us, to the faint dawn visible above the penang palm-trees edging the outer terrace. His eyes were fixed, his wet hair bristled, his mouth mowed horribly. We stood watching him in silent terror. All knew the signs upon his deathly face; but before one step was taken, one arm raised in defence, he seized a heavy Kayan parang, and with a yell almost beyond the compass of human lungs, dashed into the crowd. What a scene was that which followed! When can I forget it? There were many young girls there in all the bravery of golden waist-belts and silver gauntlets

* Orang Laut, the proud title by which the Malay rovers love to be distinguished.

and armlets of costly shell. They went down in a heap before his blind fury. The air was full of blood and long severed hair and pitiful screams. Men, brave as savage Bayards, fled in superstitious terror before the amok. Some dashed off for arms mislaid, others leaped headlong from the high verandah. One sweep he made down the house, overthrowing every soul, without pity for age or sex, or fear for the most renowned. The Pamantuah had been overwhelmed in a crowd of fugitives, who, by chance or purpose, threw themselves before him, and he did not regain his feet until the infuriated man had reached the farther door; but when, dashing the blood from eyes and forehead, the great chief marked him standing as in hesitation upon the lintel, he bounded across the prostrate bodies, and, with never a stumble on the slippery mats, rushed at him with upraised sabre. Then the amok turned to flee, as in most cases these madmen will when boldly fronted. But the Pamantuah was too quick. With one strong blow he severed the 'Lanun's muscles at the knee, and as he fell backwards cleft his skull to the neck, and the body fell with a dull thud on to the earth below.

"That was the most terrible case of amok madness I ever saw. It passed in an instant—the outbreak, the horrid noise, the murders, and the vengeance; but killed outright, or hurt beyond hope, by slashes of the deadly Kayan sword, were four women and three men; wounded, ten women and four men. Arms and hands had been lopped off at one blow, as with an axe, and I tell you that, though I had heard many a time in Singapore what fearful weapons were those 'parang latoks,' as they call them, I had not believed, nor could any man, one half of their real power."

"Why, what sort of things are they?" asked the Caballero.

"They are long, pointless swords of iron," replied the Tuan, "concave on one side, and convex on the other; the blade has a sort of twist in it, only to be seen in looking along the back, but declared by mechanicians to be of vast importance in giving

to the stroke that incredible power which makes the marvel of the 'parang latok.' But it is not worth while to enlarge upon the subject. These weapons are not very uncommon in any collection, and if you like to test their virtue for yourselves, I shall be glad to offer one of mine for the experiment. The man among *us* who fails to cut through six inches of dry wood I shall advise to consult a doctor."

"Is that really true?" asked the Shikari; "I have heard something of the sort before. But they are dangerous in unskilful hands, are they not?"

"Very. I had a woodman once who lost both legs from mortification of a wound so received. One can give but two blows with the parang latok—one from the right shoulder, downwards, to the left; one from the left foot, upwards, to the right. The Kayans also make left-hand weapons for the two corresponding cuts on the other side. The secret is—always to strike with the *concave* side towards the object aimed at; a momentary forgetfulness of this rule ensures a slashing wound in face or knees; and so many accidents thus occur, that the parang latok is by no means a popular weapon even among those who should well understand its use. Children are just as eager to jest with edged tools in the Straits as they can be in England, and the Kayan sword is apt to cause confusion in a growing family.

"Gentlemen, I have told my story, for they passed me safely round to Pontianak, and thence I took ship for Bruni. Has any one else any experience of the sort interesting to us?"

Then the Caballero took a long draught of his favourite beverage, and spoke:

"I also have a tale most curious upon this subject, but before commencing it I should like to hear your scientific and critical opinion about amok madness. Is it voluntary, or a sort of fit? Is the amok positively blind, or does he see, but not recognise, his enemy? In your story I notice that the Illanum made no attempt to injure you, or, indeed, the Pamantuah. Finally, is the Eng-

lish government just in executing these maniacs as common murderers?"

"These are very difficult questions," replied the Tuan, meditatively. "You ask, is an amok responsible for his actions, and to what extent? I say, he certainly *is* responsible, and the laws of all Eastern countries most fully declare this conviction, but to what extent I would not give any opinion. He is not blind, but he does *not* recognise his individual foe. You must also bear in mind that all tragedies of the East are attributed to the amok frenzy; though many of them are simple and commonplace murders. In this case of mine, as you rightly observe, the 'Lanun made no effort to reach the Pamantuah or me, thus showing that the exact memory of his wrong had fled from an over-excited mind, and proving insanity of a certain character. But that the amok exercises some volition in throwing himself into the homicidal passion, I have no doubt whatever; its first step, at least is not *wholly* beyond his control. The misfortune is, that a certain honour and respect is paid to these maniacs, as is evidenced by the title given to this 'Lanun, S'Ali the Amok, no doubt earned by some such desperate act in battle as gained for the V. C.'s of a Viking army the glorious name of 'Berserk.'"

"That is just the point to which I desire to lead you," interrupted the Caballero. "I have never seen a Malayan amok, but I have twice beheld that mental phenomenon which the old Norseman reverenced as the inspiration of Odin; but these instances occurred in America and to Americans. It is strange to find the same murderous hysteria rife in peoples so widely apart as the Alglo-Saxon and the Malay, and confined, so far as I ever heard, to them alone. I fancy such a fearful spirit is latent in the nerves of most strong men, unsuspected and repressed by circumstances, but apt to come to light again in a day of passion or mad terror; for in both the cases I have seen, it was fear which roused the sleeping devil."

"That is the commonest excitant in the Straits," remarked the

Tuan, "but I never met an instance of such mania in white people. Tell us the story by all means."

Began the Caballero :—"We were seated round the camp fire just before sundown, Fraser, and Vansten, and I. You have heard those names before in many a story of the time when I went gold washing in the creeks and rivulets of the Mosquito shore. Another companion there was, you remember, one Jem Beasley, my especial favourite. Our camp lay under a lofty cliff, washed bare in every 'rains,' but now mantled over with various foliage. From its face great trunks of mahogany leaned forward in a line almost horizontal, their weight supported by a thousand cable-like roots which clung to each barren crevice of the rock. The largest were marked with hieroglyphics of the Carib 'cutters,' who thus establish a claim upon the timber which no succeeding party of these honest negroes will dream of disregarding. On the lower land, cotton trees, scarcely less gigantic, towered up, wrapped round from base to crown in shrouds of Spanish moss, swinging and shuddering slowly in each breath of wind. Very solemn and weirdly is a big 'ceiba tree' at evening time, clad in its long grey cloak; very solemn and still. From the Gulf to Panama, the Indians still reverence the trunk their ancestors worshipped, and bold to impiety would he be held who made his camp fire beside the tree under which Atit, the demon of the plague, first showed herself to his Toltec ancestors. But brightly mingling with those pale green branches of the ceiba, shone the glossy leaves of the 'rubber tree,' and the lace-like plumes of the bamboo, and the thorny fronds of climbing palms. Through the mass of dry white moss, flowers of the lianas, yellow and purple and crimson, gleamed like stars, and hanging orchids dropped their long festoons of blossom. Nearer to earth, great tree-ferns flourished in the shade, and baby palms and delicate branchless stems, which struggled up towards the shrouded sky. The ground itself in this wet river-land was densely clothed with ferns and reeds and high growing moss, topped here and there by a tassel of silky seeds.

Dusk was settling down over the lovely land; already the green tree-frogs had uttered a note or two dubiously, as if to beg support of surrounding friends. The evening cry of the black baboons had almost ceased. Mosquitos and their kind began to lift thin voices angrily. The sounds of day were almost hushed, and those of night were faintly threatening. The loaded breeze of sunset brought strange murmurs from the river. What is that? Somewhat of a grunt, somewhat of a growl, much of a peevish mew. The stranger on this shore would most certainly think of wild boars, or of little vicious tiger-cats, but he who has once heard it cannot fail to recognise, for ever after, the voice of the American lion, the pretty cowardly puma. He is rousing himself for a foray among the deer and monkeys and 'cimaron' cattle, and this is his evening benediction to the little ones at home. A beautful, dreamy, sacred scene it is, that camp of ours on the Mosquito shore, as the sun goes redly down upon the river, before darkness rushes over it.

"There, Tuan!" laughed the Caballero, wiping his forehead; "America has not hitherto received her due share of honour from poetic travellers, but in point of truthful beauty I will match that picture against the best of your Oriental memories. We have not your solemn silences on our continent, nor your labyrinths of naked trunks, where twilight glimmers at noonday; but we have such flowers and softness and variety, such genial sounds of sunny life, as should well make us indifferent to any majestic beauty we cannot boast. A 'flower-savannah' is no way impressive to the nerves of superstition, nor does a mile-wide network of convolvulus rouse any weirdly feelings in the beholder; but these common scenes of the American wilderness—resonant all the bright day through with parrots' chuckling and monkeys' call, shot with the flash of flaming wings of bird and butterfly—summon, as I think, more tender religion from man's soul than any horror of still solitude."

"Tityre, tu patulæ," &c., murmured the Shikari. "The Lord

preserve us from these new old-fashions! In our fathers' time a forest was just a forest and was so spoken of, whether in Asia or America. Now, if you please, it's a religious edifice; every tree is a missionary, and each cock-sparrow a sacred spirit! Bless you, men! bless you, and cross yourselves at sight of every daisy and hawthorn bush! The rose-leaves our dear grannies used to press between the pages of their prayer-books have grown into cocoa-nut palms and mile-wide networks of convolvulus. Heaven save this country from dilettante pantheism! Why, man, a tree is a tree, the sun's the sun, and a spade's a spade. St. Patrick converted his Irish heathen by the triumphant exhibition of a shamrock, but devil a soul will you save in this day of common sense by the example of all trees that grow and all mountains that tower. I am willing to make allowances for the weakness of human nature, which has a leaning towards poetry in its weakliest phases, but do stick to one profession at a time, and, in lay society, leave the things of our Church alone!"

"Oh these tiger-slayers!" cried the Haciendero. "They are the last savages of our time! Go on, Caballero, and string your descriptions into rhyme to vex him."

"No, I have done," laughed the offender. "It was merely my wish to show that American scenery lent itself to the poetical spirit as readily as Asiatic. Give your soul peace, Shikari!

"We were seated round the fire, as I have said. Vansten was cleaning a brass cooking pot with stones and sand, making a dreadful noise. To him Fraser spoke with solemnity: 'I'm knowed as a patient man, Yank! No man knowder! But if you don't drop that kettle right smart, there'll be one of us'll regret the cairconstance—an' that one ain't me neither! 'Tarnal thunder, hoss! You'll have the bottom out o' that machine, and our kitchen fixings ain't now equal to a crowd!'

"Vansten emptied out the rattling stones, and said laughingly—

"'I han't been able for this fortnight past to tell one dainty from another, boy! Iguana tastes like monkey, and tortus like.

cat-fish—young alligator ain't to be known at all, unless one puts one's nose into the pot. I call it a waste of precious 'intment, I do! Say! Jem Beasley takes a durned long minute to soak that big carcase of his.'

"Scarcely had the Yankee spoken when our tall companion pushed aside the white curtain of moss that hung around us, and came out into the open. He had nothing on his body but a pair of wet trousers, and his naked feet were bleeding with the scratches of bamboo thorns. The little thick-set Indian, on whose shoulder he leaned, was carrying his upper clothes and boots. Our Missourian's sallow face was drawn and deathly, but his dark eyes blazed out from a broad circle of bistrous colour. He reeled in walking. I was about to address him in anxious inquiry, when Fraser grasped my arm and whispered, 'Don't speak to him! He's right-down bad! Look at his eyes! Keep still!'

"Beasley glared at us for a while without speaking, nor did he apparently recognise his old friends. At length, probably overawed by the stillness, which was indeed only broken by the murmuring noises of the awakened forest, he turned suddenly and seized the Kingman by his shoulders. The stout little Indian bent and shook in the clasp of those huge arms, which dashed him backwards and forwards as a sapling is tossed by a hurricane. And then he spoke in a harsh and terrible voice, while the foam flew from his lips as from the jaws of a wounded boar. 'You're a man,' he cried, throwing the Kingman about. 'You're a man, you leathery-hided cus! I say so! I, Jem Beasley, as can scream from Pike County to sundown! Who says you ain't? Show the man to me, an' I'll crush him so small, as you shall put his whole carcase in your medicine-bag. D'yer think I'm lying, you greasy coyote?' He glared at us silently for a moment after this outburst, then threw himself full-length upon the ground. We did not move, and after a while he uncovered his face and looked up with returning consciousness. 'An Indian skunk's

saved my life, Jos Fraser! Look at this skunk, he's saved my life!' Overcome by such a curious reflection, the gigantic filibuster rolled face downwards on the ground. The crisis was over.

"'What in thunder has happened, Kingman?' asked Vansten in a low voice. The Indian began to tell the tale in his extraordinary patois of Spanish, Rama, and English; but before he had succeeded in giving us any definite notion of the event, Beasley raised his head and asked for something to eat. We had supper together, avoiding all allusion to the scene just passed; and after it was over, while the rough tobacco and the fiery schnaps passed round, our companion related his adventure:—

"'I went down to bathe,' he said, 'in that clear pool beyond the shallow, almost opposite to us here. The Kingman came with me to wash his clothes, or some durned foolery or other. I paddled about right merrily for a while, up and down the reach, an' then I clung on to one of them low rocks as lie just beneath the surface on t'other side. I was breathing my pipes a bit, an' kinder wondering at the pretty leaves as overhang the pool, when my attention was suddintly called to the neck of the shallow just above. The water's mighty low now, you see, and there ain't above a foot upon them speckled pebbles. Great God, boys! there was as fine an alligator as ever you see creeping over the stones and sand there, lumbering down towards me. I watched the clumsy vermin for a minute or two, without thinking of any danger, o' course, until his fore paws splashed into deep water, an' he slid down like grease off a hot pan—noiseless and oily like that! Then, all in an instant, it kinder struck me as the location were getting warm; and durned warm it were, by Thunder! but I wasn't scared at first. I pushed off smart from the rock, an' made for shore, still never thinking the vermin could be after *me*. But that's what he were, boys—that's just what I found he were! Found it out smart, too! for he turned his nose towards me, an' swam on as fast as he could move his scaly flappers. Then I

grew scared, and I swot! He swum, an' I swum, an' neither of us said a word, not having breath for no perlite attentions. But the cussed thing gained on me—gained on me fast! He slid along the surface of the water with just his nose an' them cussed eyes in sight, making never a ripple in the pretty pool, but leaving after him two long smooth waves that parted from his snout. An' I got mad, seeing him so close, an' gaining always! I swum in silence, an' the alligator followed like a nightmare. But the horrid race weren't at its worst yet, though I'd not have believed that possible. For when the cussed cretur' was within twelve feet of me—it sank! Great heavens, boys, it sank suddintly out of sight, down under water, down under *me!* Swift an' noiseless, like a stone sinking, it went down. Then I got frantic with the scare! 'Twas bad for the nerves to watch them devilish eyes growing closer and clearer each time one threw a glance behind, but when they vanished, an' one couldn't even tell where the *thing* was—ah! that was terrible! I've knowed a many skeary moments, but never one like that—never—never—by the Eternal! The scaly devil was down there, at bottom of the pool, diving under me—swimming up through the clear water out of my sight! I threw myself up almost straight, an' I screamed and yelled! Thunder! I was out of all my senses, I guess, an' how it came you didn't hear me screech I cannot fancy.'

"'The Yankee was making such a muss with that golfired kettle,' said Fraser.

"'Was that so? Wal, the Kingman here he heard me, an came running up like a young 'gobbler' to the call. Give us yer claws, Ind'an, an' do you swear by my name—Jem Beasley's name—for the rest of your onnat'ral existence. This Ind'an, sir, he guessed the state of my onfortunate affairs in just half a wink, an' he drew his knife quite like a human, an' put in! I guess that wildfowl weren't no further 'n two feet from my carcase when this here Kingman shot, with scarce a bubble, beneath the surface,

and came up glancing below his belly! That's how he did the trick! Right under my body he passed, looking round smart for airthquakes an' other vermin, an' when he caught glimpses of that there alligator he just slit a buttonhole in his vest as neat as any tailor in St. Louis could fix it. Great Thunder! how the cuss stunk of musk, an' how he bled, an' how he made the pool to boil like a fish-kettle! I went on, stupid like, to shore, an' this Ind'an he pulled me out as you might pull a child from a tampano—quicksand that is—an' led me here. An' I take it I'm bound to call him a man, seeing he saved my life as such, which is what I'd never thought to do for nary Ind'an born. Good Lord, how scared I were!'

"He was scared," concluded the Caballero, "to that extent that our lives were almost in danger when he rejoined us. And such a state I call 'amok,' and I think I am right in the diagnosis, Tuan."

"No doubt the man was amok. Did you go to see the carcase? What size was it?

"Oh, yes, we went to look at him. He was about the common measure. Ten or eleven feet, I suppose."

"Well, and in spite of these travellers' tales, did you ever see one much larger?" asked the Shikari.

"No, I never did," replied the Caballero, while the Tuan also shook his head in denial. "I *have* lighted on one or two here and there which might be twelve feet long, and I would not hazard a downright opinion that some few may not grow to thirteen, or even, once in a river, to fourteen feet. But I'll give my word, having travelled freely over the continent, that no American alligators grow beyond that size."

"And I'll answer for the farther East," observed the Tuan.

"And I for the Indian peninsula," said the Shikari. "If any man told me he'd seen one of those leviathans eighteen to twenty-five feet long, that one reads of in books, I'd give him sixpence to buy a Testament."

"The size of such reptiles is wonderfully deceiving," resumed the Caballero. "My first voyage I myself saw alligators of twenty feet; ay, and I'd almost have allowed twenty-five to some of them; but one gains by experience in such matters as in others. I say now, and I speak with fair knowledge, there are none in any river I have sailed on over fourteen feet, and very few over ten feet. As to crocodiles, I give no opinion. On the Nile I never saw them even so big as that; but there are some waters in India where they are said to grow as long as eternity and broad as the prairie. I don't deny it, but I should much like to see some of those monsters without a spyglass.

"I remember that night asking Fraser, who had travelled very extensively, whether he had seen a country where the alligators were a serious danger, and he answered drily:

"'I never saw the country yet where there was much of fun to be got out of them; not what I should call real, high-class joking. Their gifts don't lie that way, owing to the onkindness of Natur', which has so fixed their jaws they couldn't larf downright hearty not if they tried. I've seed a many animals, most animals, larf free enough, but alligators don't seem to have no sense of humour. But, excepting a joke, they'll catch most things, human, nigger, or otherwise. I've knowed one of 'em to swallow a rifle, a boat-stretcher, half a man's body, an' a sack of meal. Maybe the cretur' saw that reparst in the light of a joke, but I guess it must have disagreed with him; bound to—specially the rifle barrel. But in a general way it ain't worth while to scare one's nerves about alligators. They're harmless enough commonly. Of course, like all other wild beasts, when they've once caught the vicious habit of man-eating, they keep to it, and such are rightdown dangerous. But it's only very old bulls who care for that luxury, an' they don't enjoy it long, for a whole countryside musters to the hunt when a man-eater is discovered. Commonly, the natives let 'em alone, for they breed too fast to be quite destroyed. An' most every living thing makes war upon

the young an' eggs, birds an' fish, and beasts, an' men, an' their own relatives, which is cruellest of all, ain't it? The eggs ain't such bad eating either when one's hungry; a little strong, maybe, but scarce more nasty than new-laid hens' eggs in town.'"

"What was the other occasion on which you saw a man amok with fear?" asked the sailor.

"The other case was in a very different scene," resumed the Caballero. "It was on the Gold Mountains of Chontales. The day I should not be likely to forget, though it had not been signalised by this event, for then and there I first saw a hurricane. The scenery of that table-land is bleak and sad and lonely, as in all auriferous regions. Of all the impressions which wide travel has left upon my mind, none is so strong and enduring, none dwells so persistently in my fancy, as the recollection of that dreary land. Coming from the brilliant, noisy plain, glowing with flowers, shaded with grand forests, and resonant with life, the silence and solitude and desolation of Chontales must burden the most indifferent soul. Hill succeeds to barren hill, in an endless roll; dead volcanoes, like great bowls turned over, little lakes and long smooth slopes, fill the space between their ranges. No sign of life, no shade of trees, no mark of cultivation. No movement of bird or beast, save a few wild ducks swimming on the tarns, and half-a-dozen snipe scudding along their banks. The streams flow between steep barrancas, choked with bamboos and cotton wood, or foam downward, unseen, beneath broad coarse leaves of water plants. The scarce-marked track winds in and out through the lower land, over tedious 'jicarales,' long stretches of wet ground trampled to mud by the numberless cattle, trying to the courage of the mule and the patience of the rider. Wild calabash trees, low and formal-looking, stretch their leaves, growing by fours, in a perfect cross, before the path; the ground beneath is covered with fallen globes, like large green oranges, and the boughs are bright with the purple and crimson tufts of *Bromeliaceæ*. Here and there is a tangled thicket growing upon an ancient tomb,

but the vegetation is scanty and monotonous. No flowers are there, save a tiny white star, of which I know not the name; nothing but fine grass, burnt to a grey and sombre tint by the tropical blaze. But at no time of the year is sunshine an absolute certainty here, as in the lower plains; on this day of which I speak, we had not enjoyed one ray for longer than a week. But the heat was not less; a close and stifling atmosphere shrouded all the land, and from each marshy spot—crowned though it were with plumy bamboos and spangled over with white lilies—drew a foul and poisonous miasma. So heavy was the day of which I speak; overhead, from zenith to the sky-line, hung dun and woolly clouds; the dull air quivered with heat; mountain and volcano and savannah lay still and grey as a landscape of the dead. All through the land fevers were rife in man, and moriña in cattle. At the little hacienda I had that morning left, almost every soul had his or her head tied up, according to the national prescription, in a handkerchief. True is that Italian proverb which says, 'Dove non va il sole, va il medico.'

"I proposed to rest at the foot of a tiny volcano, round and smooth as a hemisphere. 'There is water on the other side,' suggested my Indian mozo, and we went thither. Not only was water found in the dell, but also trees, of dimensions rare throughout that district. My guide looked round with the air of a man who has memories stirring in his brain, and observed, 'It was here we fought the filibusters, señor.' 'How was that?' I asked, knowing little better than other Europeans the details of Walker's war. Then he told me, in the epic manner, how one Turley organised a band of rowdies in California for wholesale robbery in this land under cover of the war, and how he passed them off on Walker's agents as experienced soldiers, which perhaps they were; how they refused to separate, and were enrolled as an entire company in the 'Rangers;' how they deserted in a body at the first opportunity, and marched through the 'Oriental,' murdering and plundering the scanty population; and how the French diggers of

Libertad gathered a force of natives, and murdered the rowdies to a man on this very spot. But he omitted to tell me another detail—how the false filibusters had been tricked of their arms under a promise of amnesty. Nevertheless, this story was interesting to me, as a curious suggestion of the possibilities still extant in our nineteenth century—scarce fifteen years ago!—and it passed the time agreeably.

"But on setting out again I perceived a change in the atmosphere at our first step from the shadow of the dell. 'What is this?' I asked the Indian, shivering with cold and a general depression. 'An ouragan, I fear, señor!' he answered, in manifest uneasiness. I paused, knowing well enough by hearsay the terror of these storms to be aware our further journey was impossible. 'What is to be done?' I asked. "How long have we still before it breaks?' 'Half an hour at the outside,' he answered, looking up at the darkening sky. 'I feared it this morning, but the Indians laughed at me.'

"By the way," the Caballero interrupted himself, "it is curious that the aborigines of Central America always speak of one another as Indians, using the word, apparently, almost as a title to be proud of.

"After a hurried consultation it was decided to stay in our present position until the storm should pass, seeing we were safe from the wind under our little volcano, and that we could not possibly cross the Lagarto stream before it broke. And so we sat down, tied the mules with double ropes, and waited the event, wrapped in our thick horse-rugs. And all their warmth was needed. More and more piercing the cold became, more and more dark the sky. Birds, whose presence we had not suspected, began to twitter nervously in the trees below; but the stillness of the heavens was terrible. The frozen air seemed to pour down on us in waves, but no vibration could be noted in the atmosphere. Darker it grew and darker, till all the land was swiftly shrouded over. An indescribable terror possessed us both; the mules

cowered closely down upon the ground, with their legs gathered under them, like rabbits squatting, and their noses pressed to earth. The Indian's face was pinched with cold and anxiety; he shivered under his chamarra.

"Suddenly a frozen gust came shrieking over the mountains, then another, and the ouragan burst forth. Following the example of mules and man, I threw myself flat on the slope of the volcano, and clung tightly. The roar of the tempest as it passed was as the voice of a nation shouting; not with gradual violence it broke out, as in our calm lands, but all in a moment, resistless, merciless. Clods of earth, branches, even small stones, as the Indian declared, whizzed in mid-air above our heads, the hurtle of their furious flight riding shrilly on the thunderous music of the wind. Every leaf and every smaller bough was stripped from the cotton trees beneath us, and whirled over hill and valley to the far Atlantic. Our prostrate bodies were plucked and struck as with giant hands. And then, in the very thickest of the storm, as if the horror of it were not yet sufficient, as if Nature desired to show us all her dread power in these lands, in the very thickest of the storm, while we lay pressed close to earth, stifling, breathless, deafened with its din and violence, I felt the sharp sick shudder of an earthquake. The big trunks in the dell, protected hitherto by cover of the land, then crashed swiftly down; when the first gave way, they fell, as we could note afterwards, like ninepins in a row, each overthrowing its neighbour. Not a stem survived; but so horrid was the roaring that scarce a sound of their downfall reached our ears.

"How long that scene lasted, I cannot tell; perhaps not more than fifteen minutes, perhaps half an hour. Compared with Eastern typhoons, or even with the hurricanes of the Atlantic coast, it was but a little storm maybe, yet I will admit I was nearly frightened from my wits. The rugs wers torn to tatters on our backs; we could not breathe except with mouths resting on the turf. I would not disparage the grander storms of other

lands, but that little ouragan on the Gold Mountains was quite startling enough for my ambition. And when the wind had passed by in its mad career towards Blewfields, the rain began. It poured on us in a cataract that threatened to wash the hills bodily away. But we could get no shelter, of course; there was no resource but patience. Miserably we sat under the volcano's lee, and let the torrent fall upon our heads. About a quarter of an hour we had rested there, and already each dell and burn was a raging cataract. For you I need not plunge into poetical extravagance to describe the violence of that rain; in either tropic it comes down with equal force when the flood-gates of heaven are thus opened. Suddenly we heard a sound of shouting, which rose above the swish and thudding of the water. 'There's a man in the dell below!' shouted the Indian in my ear, but with no sign of interest in his stolid face. 'That man will be drowned!' he argued calmly.

"Alone, I dashed down the sodden slope, and stood upon its crumbling edge, looking eagerly into the hollow. Not an hour since we had admired the verdure of the foliage, and gazed with delight upon the stately trunks that sprang along its peaceful brook; now, the dell was filled full with a tumult of muddy waves, tugging this way and that, struggling, foaming, roaring. The trees were all uprooted and broken, the little brook was a furious river. And right beneath me, among the tangle of boughs, a man struggled against the gathering waters. It was not in my power to render him aid; I could but shout encouragement, and watch his efforts with sickening sympathy. Again and again he fell, and with each instant the torrent swelled. The boughs were twisted round his feet, but he clung to them desperately. And all the while he shouted hoarsely, and struggled on. I ran to the cowering mules, and, hastily tying their halters together, threw the rope towards the drowning man. Not till the fourth or fifth cast did he seem to see the means of safety, or to understand my intention, though I called my loudest, and the rope fell close

beside him. But at length he grasped it, and we dragged him out. Again and again the undermined bank gave way, and once he lost his hold; but we threw the noose again, just as the water swept him off, and dragged him safe to land.

"But his behaviour, when thus extricated from deadly peril, was not encouraging to the philanthropic spirit. With a wild oath he dashed off our hands, and tore away over the hill-side, heedless of our calls. Recovering his feet, the Indian gave vent to an angry 'carajo!' and sullenly retired. Alone I pursued the madman, chasing him with many a slide and fall over the slippery turf, until at length he came down headlong and lay still. It has often struck me since how very comic our race must have seemed to a bystander able to appreciate the humorous; but that Divine gift an all-wise Providence has denied the Indian character. He fell, as I have said, and I approached him cautiously, remembering the tale just told, and the dangerous fury of my filibuster friend in a case somewhat similar. He did not move, but lay helpless on the ground, glaring at me with the wild eyes of a maniac. I called the Indian, and, most unwillingly, he aided me to carry the rescued man towards our mules.

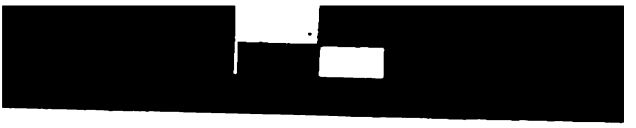
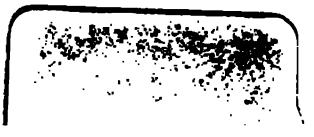
"It was not for some hours after that he recovered strength and sense to tell his story. We got him to Juigalpa, and, in a horrid little inn there, the best house that town (!) can boast, he narrated to me the concatenation of circumstances which had thus turned his brain. It would appear that, knowing the country well, it was the habit of this man to break his journey in the dell of which I have told you, and to sleep away the hottest hours of the day in a certain grotto which existed there. In that cavern he was, no doubt, when we descended to lunch, and there remained, having partaken freely of aguardiente, or schnaps, or some such pleasant liquor, until the ouragan broke out. That roused him, as indeed its fury might almost have roused those dead chieftains in the cairns around. He fought his way to the entrance—to be dashed back instantly, bruised and terror-stricken,

by the unchained winds. Bewildered by the fall, deafened with that unearthly shrieking and thunder, he lay awhile upon the cavern floor, until the heaving of the 'trembler,' the crash of falling stones and tossing of the earth, recalled his consciousness. Instinct caused him once again to dash at the cavern's mouth; but again he was driven back. The situation indeed was horrible: exposed to a fearful death inside, to be buried alive under the heaving roof, but unable to escape. After the second effort, he lay still awhile, helpless and half-unconscious with fear. But a dreadful sound roused the hunted man to life again. Louder than the roar without, more horrible, more full of deadly terror than any sound of an inanimate world, the voice of the jaguar stunned his ears. Close beside him it burst out, echoing from rock to rock, from floor to roof, from every quarter of the vault at once. Peal after peal, beaten back and rebounding, that awful threat thundered round. For a moment he strove to trace the sound, to spy two flaming eyes in the darkness; but no sign was to be noted, no clue discovered. Again and again that roar reverberated above, below, and on every side. Then he went mad: and I, for one, say, No shame to him! A 'tiger's' voice is fearful to hear, you men, whether in the Eastern jungle or on a lonely mountain of America; but in a black cavern, where no man can tell whence it comes nor where the beast may be, the menace is a trial few nerves could bear. Try for yourselves! Only go with a savage dog into a vaulted cellar, and hear the bewildering echo of his bark! The whole space will ring, and no man, however experienced, could guess whence danger is to be expected. That mystery makes the horror of the scene. My friend dashed headlong from the cavern, where death in three dreadful shapes was threatening—wind and earthquake and the tiger's claws. And on the threshold, as though fate had leagued all elements against his life, he fell into the raging cataract from which I had rescued him. 'The Lord made a dead set at me that time,' James used to say, in quaint and yet not consciously

irreverent phrase; 'but there was work found for me somewhere on a sudden, an' you was app'inted for to lug me out of that there circumstance where the Lord had fixed me. Bound to be work somewhere for me, for he don't make no sport of man, nor yet He han't such an idle time as He should do miracles in fun. An' I'm ready for that work, sir, ready an' gay, when the name an' natur' of it is revealed to me.' Once, after this usual declaration, he added with dry humour, 'There's a many as shows kindness to me in giving their notion of the work, what it may be. Some thinks it would lie in just loafing round with a revolver; others reckon it up as a matter of strolling on the Camino Reale every dark night, with an empty belt, a sharp machete, an' a chance of diggers from Libertad. Then there was one fat man, down to Leon, t'other day, as seemed to notion I'd kinder do Lord's work in the Chicago pig-trade; and at Matagalpa there was a good man as hinted strong that the hand of Providence, in his opinion, had marked me for horse-lifting as plain as earthquakes. I don't see as it's any of them things. But there's some work, sir, some big work, as I were saved for, an', please God, that work I'll do!'"

"Bravo, Caballero!" cried the Sailor. "Your last story reminds me of something—— But it's nearly two o'clock, gentlemen, and I'll try to be virtuous! Do any of our roads lie together? Good-night!"

And we go homewards, with a consciousness of having spent the evening more profitably and more pleasantly than nine hundred and ninety-nine men of every thousand in this dreary London.

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.